

YOUR CHAMBER YOUR VOICE

MARCH/APRIL 2022



Contents . . .

Page 2	Introduction
Page 3	Chamber News
Pages 4 - 5	Membership
Pages 14 - 15	New Faces
Pages 18 and 26	Take a Break
Pages 30 - 31	Awards Launch
Pages 32 - 34	Patrons
Pages 35 - 38	Charity



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Ravens Shelf, Hawkstone Park

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Bringing the businesses of Shropshire back together

If the past two years have taught us anything, it's to take nothing for granted, and be ready for whatever life has to throw at us.

Here at Shropshire Chamber, we've been working harder than ever to ensure businesses remain informed and supported through some of the most difficult trading conditions in living memory.

It's clear that 2022 will come with yet more challenges – but it will also present opportunities too. And we must never overlook the many amazing success stories on the doorstep.

Our business community has shown incredible creativity, adaptability, determination and innovation since the first Covid lockdown. Companies have 'found a way' during the darkest of times.

That's why we were particularly pleased to be officially unveiling our 2022 Shropshire Chamber Business Awards on January 27 – an event which is going to be bigger and better than ever before.

Launched in 2001, the awards have attracted audiences of up to 900 people for the black-tie celebration, earning a reputation as the local business 'Oscars'.

But this year, we're spreading it across two days – the traditional black-tie awards night at Telford International Centre on June 10 will be preceded by a day-long conference and expo at the Mercure Telford Centre hotel on June 8.

Alongside our traditional categories like company of the year, best new business and best small business, we will be introducing new categories which reflect the challenges our businesses have faced.

For example, there will be a 'Covid response award' and fresh categories for wellbeing in the workplace, and sustainability.

And our conference will give us the chance to bring top-level speakers to the county, to tackle the issues that matter to our local business community.

We all need something to look forward to in these testing times, don't we? This two-day Telford-based celebration promises to be the highlight of the year's business calendar.

Richard Sheehan
Chief Executive Officer,
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

Ambitious plans to grow Chamber membership



Liz Holdsworth, right, receives charity membership for PALZ from Jane Pritchard of Aico

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has set itself 'ambitious but achievable' growth targets after a year which has seen membership numbers expand and diversify.

The Chamber revealed at its annual meeting that it was seeking to double its membership over the next three years, helped by the launch of a number of initiatives.

They include a suite of innovative and creative events embracing topics and sectors that are relevant to the burning issues of today, and short-sharp training courses to help upskill the local workforce.

Chief executive Richard Sheehan also announced that the Chamber would be unveiling a 'new and exciting' website, allowing companies to interact with the team and other members in fresh ways.

Another key factor on recent growth is the Chamber's revamped membership model, including a new Charity Membership Fund giving free membership to charities and not-for-profit organisations.

The fund is delivered in conjunction with Enterprise Flex-E-Rent, McPhillips and Aico - three 'ambassadors' which have all donated to support the third sector.

Mia Carter, Shropshire Chamber's director of membership, said: "The fund

gives the third sector access to our essential level membership, which includes a host of benefits such as HR, tax, legal services and health and safety support.

"It also entitles them to a wide range of discounted training programmes, and attendance at six Chamber's network club sessions of their choice."

To qualify for consideration, the organisations must have a Shropshire postcode, and an annual turnover of less than £1 million. All applications will be assessed and considered by the Ambassadors panel, who will make the final decision.

The latest Shropshire-based organisation to benefit from the programme is PALZ, which supports people who have held challenging and demanding jobs, and who are now living with Alzheimer's or dementia.

It gives them a social environment that relates to their previous working environment boosting their self-respect and confidence as well as providing mental stimulation.

After establishing a successful local Shropshire group with generous sponsorship by local businesses, the next step is to create other groups across the UK.

Liz Holdsworth, who chairs the group, visited Aico's headquarters in Oswestry to receive her membership.

She said: "As a recently established

charity we are enormously grateful for the access to membership of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and the support that is available.

"We are privileged to be able to receive their support towards our objectives in helping people with dementia. We are looking forward to a mutually rewarding future."

She added: "PALZ - Professionals with Alzheimer's - meetings take place every two months and feature a variety of interesting speakers that provide intellectual stimulation to the audience.

"We have found that the meetings increase self-respect, confidence and mental stimulation in a friendly atmosphere.

"It is a great opportunity to meet others in a similar situation and of course supportive friends and relatives are also very welcome."

Shropshire Chamber's Charity Membership Fund has a limit on the number of memberships that it can provide, but there are currently still a few vacancies.

More details are available at www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/membership/join-us/charity-membership-fund/

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has set itself 'ambitious but achievable' growth targets after a year which has seen membership numbers expand and diversify

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has

AFC Telford United
01952 640 064
New Bucks Head
Stadium
Watling Street
Wellington
TELFORD
TF1 2TU

Calluna Graphix
01743 627400
8 Knights Park
Hussey Road
Battlefield
Enterprise Park
SHREWSBURY
SY1 3TE

Forum 50+
07932 828333
Box 7 Unit D
Stafford Park 9
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF3 3AF

Inspec Technology
Ltd
07380268793
Carinya House
Birch Grove
Alveley
BRIDGNORTH
WV15 6LE

SY Homes
(Shrewsbury) Ltd
01743 403131
White Hopton
House
Wern Lane
Sarn
SY16 4EN

AV Birch Limited
01746 714418
Aldenham Business
Park
Muckley Cross
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Shropshire
WV16 4RR

Daniel James
Residential
07791 700741
The Shire Office
The British Ironwork
Centre
OSWESTRY
SY11 4JH

Friends of the Flaxmill
Maltings
Visitor Centre
Flaxmill Maltings
Spring Gardens
Ditherington
SHREWSBURY
SY1 2SZ

Jigsaw
07831222293
PR House
Hortonwood 30
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF1 7ET

SYA
07766460428
The New Lodge
Upton Lane
SHREWSBURY
SY2 5RR

Association for
Specialist Fire
Protection
02476 935412
Spectra House
COVENTRY
West Midlands
CV4 8HS

Designs in Mind
7876031912
17a Cross Street
OSWESTRY
Shropshire
SY11 2NF

Greendawn Power
Limited
03455120044
The Mill
Ludlow Road
Harpwood
BRIDGNORTH
WV16 6TZ

Ladder for
Shropshire
07939 664033
Vanguard Way
Battlefield
Enterprise Park
SHREWSBURY
SY1 3TD

Save our Shropshire
CIO
7970825258
15-17 School Road
Edgmond
NEWPORT
Shropshire
TF10 8LB

Bawden &
Associates
01582 466704
Noneley Hall
Noneley
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY4 5SL

Donnington
Partnership CIO
01952 382202
Donnington
Community Hub
St Matthews Road
Donnington
TF2 7PR

Hobsons Brewery &
Company Ltd
01299 270837
Newhouse Farm
Tenbury Road
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MORTIMER
DY14 8RD

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12th Floor
London Wall
LONDON
EC2Y 5EB

Blue Orchid
Recruitment Ltd
01743 612013
51 Orchid Meadow
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SY5 0FB

Dynamic Support
Systems
01588 638300
Unit E Bishops Castle
Business Park
BISHOP'S CASTLE
Shropshire
SY9 5BX

Hope Initiatives
01743 444179
Unit C3/C4
Greenwood Court
Cartmel Drive
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 3TB

Metro Rod Mid
Wales & Shropshire
01952 442754
Unit 12
Queensway Link
Stafford Park 17
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07990517302
1 Grangemere
Stirchley
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Shropshire
TF3 1QX

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07966416267
Unit 1 Old Smithfield
Industrial Estate
Aston street
SHIFNAL
TF11 8DT

Educating Kids
Outdoors Ltd
07876658467
Astol Farmhouse
Norton
SHIFNAL
Shropshire
TF11 9EW

INTune Radio
Shropshire
7970702691
5 Dunkeld Drive
SHEWSBURY
Shropshire
SY2 5UZ

Oswestry
Herbarium Ltd
01691 656934
15 Albion Hill
OSWESTRY
Shropshire
SY11 1QA

Share Shrewsbury
07973 702772
Westley House
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Shropshire
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01952 225 890
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Hortonwood 32
TELFORD
Shropshire
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0330 010 0140
Trench Lock 3
TELFORD
Shropshire
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SBM Digital Systems
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Sutton Hall Farm
Sutton Maddock
Nr Shifnal
SHIFNAL
TF11 9NQ

Shawthorpe
Recruitment Ltd
01952 263974
Unit 13
Stafford Park 12
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF3 3BJ

new members for you to engage with

Shropshire Collaborative Law LTD
7583133507
Boundary House
Morda Close
OSWESTRY
SY11 2BA

Telford Crisis Support
7792192801
78-83 Severn Walk
Sutton Hill
TELFORD
TF7 4AS

The University of Birmingham (Amcash)
0121 4143436
Pritchatts Road
Edgbaston
BIRMINGHAM
B15 2SE

Washington & Riley Ltd
01630 654905
Units 3-4 Llewellyn
Roberts Way
Maer Lane Ind Est
MARKET DRAYTON
TF9 1QS

Whitchurch Community Services Association
01948 258220
Beechtree
Community Centre
WHITCHURCH
SY13 1NT

Shropshire Regimental Museum Trust
017 43 358516
Shrewsbury Castle
Castle Gates
SHREWSBURY
SY1 2AT

The Shropshire Distillery
01691 624417
C/O Gadlas Croft
Eastwick Lane
ELLESMERE
Shropshire
SY12 9DY

University of Chester - Careers and Employability
01244 513066
Exton Park
Parkgate Road
CHESTER
CH1 4BJ



Sight loss Shropshire
01743 250808
The Lantern
Meadow Farm
Drive
SHREWSBURY
SY1 4NG

Spencer Hylton Associates Limited
0800 567 7440
Grosvenor House
11 St Pauls Square
BIRMINGHAM
B3 1RB

Telford Couriers Limited
01952 405523
46 Springhill
Crescent
Madeley
TELFORD
TF7 4DN

Training and Events available at Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

Events

16th February – Network of Women at Hadley Park House Hotel

18th February – Professionals Partnership at Shrewsbury Town Football Club

18th February – Netwalking at Carding Mill Valley

3rd March – Property Partnership at Aico Ltd

For more information on events please contact Kelly on 01952 208228

Training

16th February – Word Press in a Day held at the Shropshire Chamber Telford Office

16th February – Starting your Employees the Right Way held at the Shropshire Chamber Shrewsbury Office

16th February – Addressing Work Place Concerns held at the Shropshire Chamber Shrewsbury Office

17th Feb – Structed Sales Training for more Profitable Results held at the Shropshire Chamber Telford Office

18th February – COSHH Training held at the Shrewsbury office

21st February – Leadership and Management Development held at the Shropshire Chamber Shrewsbury

24th February – Team Building in a Hybrid World held at the Shropshire Chamber Telford Office

For more information on training please contact Hollie on 01952 208225



New Year, new office, new team at Bradford Estates

Bradford Estates – a family business which boasts more than 900 years of history – is starting the New Year in new offices and boosting its workforce with five new team members from a rich and varied background.

The recruits include a Small Works Manager, a personal assistant to two senior directors and bolstering the business' finance capability with three new support team members.

Jessica Beech is personal assistant to the business's property director and estates director, and has had a colourful life.

"I used to live in the Middle East but more recently worked for seven years in Birmingham as personal assistant to the chief executive of a Fund Management company," said Jessica.

"But I had enough of the city and was craving greenery and countryside so I have literally gone from a sandpit to a concrete jungle to a rural haven at Bradford Estates.

"Outside of work, I love the outdoors – I am obsessed with conquering mountains."

Bradford Estates' new Small Works Manager Paul Ashcroft manages responsive and reactive maintenance throughout the estates, as well as an internal workforce of nine.

Father of three Paul was attracted by how

family-orientated the company is.

"I have been in construction for 20 years and as well as being a Small Works Manager, I have also been a Site Manager and Contracts Manager but this job at Bradford Estates is literally all my dream jobs in one go," said Paul.

Finance Assistant Nela Islam-Novakova was born in the Czech Republic and moved to England after meeting her husband at university.

Nela has since worked for a number of companies including manufacturing firm Eurocraft in Dudley and leisure firm Firewalker UK in Wolverhampton.

Nela – originally a teacher – also worked for Flichity Estates gaining experience of residential and commercial lettings.

"I really enjoyed that and wanted to work for another estate so am delighted to be at Bradford Estates."

Nela loves gardening and produces her own fruit and vegetables. She also has chickens and ducks – almost a small holding, she says.

Finance administrator Catherine Drummond worked for Carington Estates in Buckinghamshire for 14 years before moving to the Midlands with her husband's job.

She started temping with Bradford Estates in July and her job was made

permanent at the beginning of January.

Catherine is enjoying getting to know the area since moving up in March.

Charlotte Burrows, 26, from Shifnal joins the team as an administrator after working in operations and admin for a manufacturing company in Telford.

"The new role at Bradford Estates is a challenge for me and a little bit out of my comfort zone but I'm excited to try a new industry and learn new skills," she said. "I only live down the road in Shifnal so I was already aware of the great work Bradford Estates does. I'm looking forward to being a part of it."

Bradford Estates' recruitment drive comes after 4,000 acres of farmland was taken back to create a new farming business, Bradford Farming, under the responsibility of a dedicated farm manager for the first time in 40 years.

The changes include new regenerative farming practices being adopted across the estates as well as plans to take a more active role in the sustainable management of its woodland too.

Three new team members also joined the Bradford Farming team towards the end of 2021 as; Doug McCowan joined as Arable Operations Manager and Tom Hughes and James Ward as Arable Technicians.

Most successful year

Pioneering battery and energy storage company AceOn says 2021 was its most successful year to date – and 2022 promises to be even better.

The Shropshire company – dubbed the Telford company taking on Tesla – says the next 12 months will see the roll-out of innovative products, a major announcement about a pioneering renewable energy scheme and 'significant' growth across the whole business.

Mark Thompson, managing director of AceOn Group, said the company had developed new products, partnerships and profile throughout 2021.

"The last year has clearly been a difficult and challenging time for everyone in so many ways due to COVID-19. But it's been really pleasing to be able to say that we enjoyed a really successful year in 2021 – our most successful 12 months ever in terms of orders and growth – but we are really confident that we can eclipse this in 2022," said Mark.

"The last 12 months have seen us strengthen our reputation as a key player in delivering innovative solutions to help drive the move to a zero carbon, sustainable economy and we have some really exciting developments planned for 2022 which will further enhance that profile."

Among the key developments for AceOn in 2021 were:

- More than 100 successful installations of AceOn's Renewergy virtual power plant for housing associations, including Wrekin Housing Group, and councils, with a pipeline of interest now extending across Great Britain
- Successful start to work on a £1million Innovate UK project involving the use of new sodium ion battery technology to generate sustainable solar power in sub-Saharan Africa
- Launch of AceOn2.6 modular residential energy storage battery to wide acclaim and interest
- Battery pack design and manufacture orders from around the globe – including designing a unique battery which helped British tennis player Antony Cotterill compete in the Paralympic Games in Tokyo – and a significant increase in battery distribution orders
- Huge interest in AceOn's shared stand with MCS – the Microgeneration Certification Scheme – at the Solar and Storage Live conference to underline its national commitment to helping train a new generation of installers
- AceOn making the finals for the Manufacturing Innovator of the Year award in the 2021 Innovation Awards



Mark said the full rollout of the AceOn2.6 battery – which is ideal for retrofit installations and comes with a warranty of ten years or 6,000 cycles – would be hugely important over the next 12 months.

"If we are serious about tackling the challenges of climate change – and we simply have no other options now – then our new battery will play a crucial role in helping convert the vast majority of our housing stock to renewable technology. And with energy prices continuing to soar for everyone, installing solar panels with energy storage is financially beneficial as well as a positive impact on the environment."

The coming 12 months will also bring a major announcement for social housing providers and landlords about a ground-breaking pay-back model for solar and storage installations, which could represent a significant step forward in scaling-up the take-up of renewable energy provision in the sector.

And Mark said the battery distribution side of the business already had a healthy order book for the coming year from the UK and across the globe, with AceOn's flagship own brand battery range to the fore.

For more information about the AceOn group visit <https://www.aceongroup.com/>

ISDN IS GOING TO BE A THING OF THE PAST SOON TOO

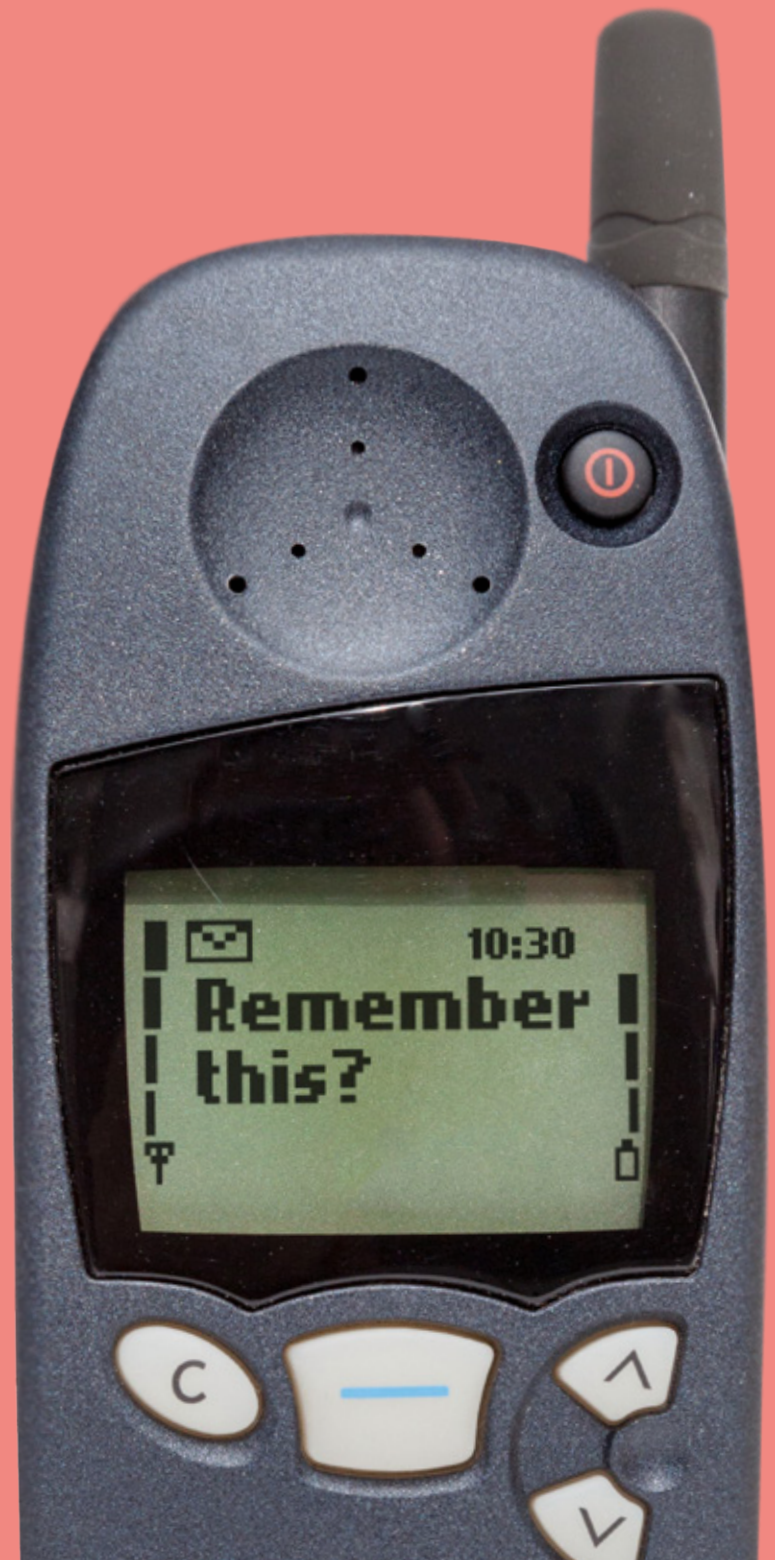
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New approvals as part of accident repair programme

Matt Ellison and Darren Fielding at Autocraft Telford, with the new fully electric Fiat 500 Prima Convertible



Autocraft Telford, Shropshire's leading accident repair centre have added Abarth, Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Fiat Professional and Jeep to its impressive portfolio of vehicle manufacturer approvals as part of the Stellantis Multi-Brand Accident Repair Programme.

This latest approval allows Autocraft's technicians to receive ongoing training from these brands in order to maintain the highest levels of quality and safety, repairing all vehicles back to manufacturer standards.

In January 2021, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) and PSA Groupe merged to form a new entity called Stellantis.

Stellantis offer a full spectrum of choice from luxury, premium and mainstream passenger vehicles to pickup trucks, SUVs and light commercial vehicles, as well as dedicated mobility, financial, and parts and service brands Autocraft have now been confirmed as part of the new Stellantis Multi-Brand Accident Repair Programme which was created in January 2022, receiving the approval to repair all of the vehicle manufacturers that fall under the Stellantis brand.

Matt & Darren Fielding, Directors of Autocraft are delighted to be part of the Stellantis Multi-Brand Accident Repair Programme in 2022. "This is another fine accolade for our team. We are proud to be working with Stellantis and to add Abarth, Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Fiat Professional and Jeep to our group of manufacturer approvals."

How do you get your vehicle repaired? Call Autocraft on 01952 617468 or email office@autocrafttelford.co.uk

A series of free profit improvement webinars

Shrewsbury based CBSL Accountants are planning a series of three Webinars on the subject of Profit Improvement. The first, which covers Good Financial Data, is available to view on their website. The webinars are intended to help business owners and managers to see and understand the building blocks that are needed to help achieve business profitability targets for all types and sizes of business.

Good Financial data covers; Inputs (accounting packages), Process (applying the correct accounting principles) to the resulting Output (financial accounts). This module takes you through tips and hints on how to read Profit & Loss and Balance Sheets, and why it's important to make sure what you are looking at truly reflects the business.

Generally, there has been a movement from desktop to cloud-based systems.

The benefit of cloud is the ability to share data securely, receive automated updates, capture data efficiently, with less duplication and re-inputting data; and not least link to other packages e.g., bank to bank feeds, CRM into accounting packages, project management into accounting packages, and not forgetting automated emailing in order to invoice, gain payments, and schedule payment reminders. This is covered in the Webinar in more detail.

Some of the key points are; Data become information, which becomes useful in decision making when the business owner(s) or manager(s) are able to;

- Use the right accounting package, set up correctly, with full training;
- Use professionals, it saves time which is the greatest hidden cost to directors – and challenge those professionals on a regular basis.
- Schedule time to review the accounts
- Forward plan – and measure against plan periodically.

Future Webinars in the series will include Ancillary Data – people, process, marketing, infrastructure; and Measure & Review – the pillars to profitability and how to take the theory and turn it into practice for your business.

The Webinars are available for anyone to view – free of charge and with no need to sign up or submit your details or information – at www.CBSLGroup.com

Clocking on to a new system

DM Recruitment has launched a digital clocking in app for their clients. When a temp worker clocks in on their system it is automatically logged on a timesheet ready for clients to review.

Customer Service Manager, Edward Danks, is spearheading the roll out of the Auriga app, which launched at the start of December. The new app links directly to their CRM system, and allows workers to view their shifts, clock in and out, and share their availability in real time. He said, "We are excited to be rolling out a new digital system which we think will reduce the workload for our clients. When our agency workers clock in and out, it will be automatically recorded on the timesheets and payroll documents. This saves our clients time inputting the data, instead they will just need to confirm they are happy with the recorded data.

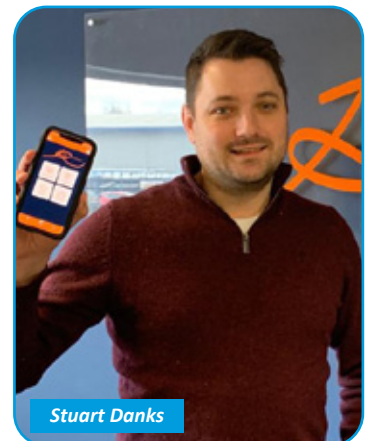
"The new system will help our temps to save time too. They can sign all their documents electronically and we can onboard them in to new jobs really quickly, helping them to stay in work. They can also specify when they want time off. Plus they have added reassurance they will get paid for the hours they work because the onus is on them to record their hours on the system."

People looking for temp work can record when they are available through the same app. DM Recruitment hope this will speed up the recruitment process.

Managing Director, Stuart Danks, adds, "Given the challenges of labour shortages this year, I feel it is important to have the slickest systems in place to ensure our clients receive an efficient service from our temps. It's great to provide our temps with a paperless system for getting work that reduces contact with people. However, if guidelines permit, we still allow workers to come in to the office to complete their paperwork if that is more suitable for them. We look forward to introducing this new system in to more workplaces in 2022."

Before downloading the new app, users need to register on the website at dm-recruitment.com and follow the instructions.

DM Recruitment is part of the newly formed DMOS Group, bringing together all of Mr Danks' businesses, which includes recruitment consultancy for permanent positions with Opus Vitae and their Technical Division - Simply Interview. The DMOS Group works with businesses across the West Midlands and mid-Wales.



Stuart Danks

Thriving 2021 paves the way for 2022

A Shropshire manufacturer experienced its best-ever trading year in 2021, paving the way for a successful 2022 thanks to a strong order book of domestic and export business.

Telford based Fabweld Steel Products (FSP), which manufactures access covers and other fabricated steel products for the construction industry, initially set out plans to push its growth to 20 per cent during 2021. But smashed this target with record-breaking sales helping to post a 26.5 per cent in comparison to the previous year.

Managing Director Richard Hilton attributed the rapid rise to: "Maximising sales and export opportunities, despite the challenges of Covid-19 and Brexit.

"The past two years has been a turbulent time for the manufacturing industry, with the addition of Covid restrictions initially limiting our manufacturing processes, as well as the new regulations imposed because of the UK's exit from the EU and raw material prices rising over 150 per cent.

"However, at FSP we've really come together as a collaborative unit the past twelve months, with our sales and operations teams seamlessly pushing our products and services to supply new projects and new countries.

"In 2021, we have supplied our flagship FAB PAVE™ to the prestigious Munich Frauenkirche in Germany, FAB SECURE™ products to water reservoirs across France



FSP Managing Director Richard Hilton

and a FAB TOP™ fireproof emergency exit cover to Israel. We have built strong relationships in these countries and continually look to replicate this elsewhere.

"Exports have risen to almost 15 per cent of our overall sales in 2021 and we know these markets have huge potential for growth. We have proven that overseas sales can, and will, be a big part of our business into 2022 and beyond."

Wayne Carter, Operations Director said: "We've worked on some really notable projects closer to home throughout the year too, with the famous Oval Cricket ground being a particular highlight.

"We have also supplied to facilities for the upcoming Commonwealth games, National

Grid substations and logistical warehouses including Amazon. We're hugely proud of our Telford roots, but to think we've supplied our products to some of the most recognised buildings and sites across the UK and beyond is something we're delighted with.

"To complement the boost in sales, the company also welcomed a number of new staff to its team this year, moving from 40 to 43 employees throughout the year — 34 of those full time and five on apprenticeship schemes.

"As we look forward to 2022, we have some ambitious targets and plans for the year ahead, but we are confident that the business will continue to go from strength to strength over the next twelve months."

In need of additional funding to drive your business forward in 2022?

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email: lending@impetus-marches.co.uk

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County's commercial property still in demand

The commercial property market in Shropshire is "bouncing back" with a growing number of premises changing hands, according to specialists at Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors.

The firm has recently assisted with the lease of a new coffee shop and bar in Oswestry, which lawyers say is a good example of the changing trends in commercial property.

Stewart Smith, associate solicitor in the commercial and agricultural property team based in Lanyon Bowdler's Oswestry office, said: "I was delighted to assist with the opening of Twisted Taste, a new coffee shop and bar, which is indicative of how our town centres are changing.

"The unit was formerly part of a traditional clothes shop which had been in the centre of Oswestry for nearly 40 years, and the switch to a coffee shop and bar is a classic example of the changing face of town centres nowadays.

"Towns and cities are evolving, with leisure and hospitality businesses gradually replacing the type of retail shops we have traditionally associated with town centres."

Laura Lougher, of Lanyon Bowdler's commercial and agricultural property team in Ludlow, said she had also noticed a growing number of commercial units changing use.



Stewart Smith helped the team at Twisted Taste

She added: "We are certainly seeing renewed interest in a range of commercial property across our area, and I agree with Stewart about the way town centres are developing.

"A number of leases I have assisted with recently have involved former retail units converting into commercial use, such as co-working office spaces, and it's likely that trend will continue.

"It's encouraging to see the property market bouncing back, and there will always be a demand for commercial property even if the type of businesses are changing."

For more advice about commercial property, call the team at Lanyon Bowdler on 0800 652 3371 or visit www.lblaw.co.uk



Laura Lougher

Cheers – a year to celebrate

It's been a year to remember for award-winning Shropshire vineyard Hencote – and the signs are good that 2022 will be even better.

In the last 12 months the Shrewsbury estate has earned a place in English winemaking history for its red wines, won rave reviews from some of the UK's top experts, successfully reopened its stunning restaurant after lockdown and enjoyed a record-breaking year for bookings in both the restaurant and its glamping operation.

And all the early indications are that 2022 could deliver more of the same.

General manager Mark Stevens said that despite the challenges of the pandemic, 2021 had been something of a vintage year for Hencote.

"During the year we have become the first English vineyard to win gold medals for two separate still red wines at the International Wine Challenge – the Olympics of our industry. The results mean that in total our 2018 vintages have won a remarkable two golds, a silver and six bronzes at the 2020 and 2021 IWC competitions, with a further four silvers at the Decanter World Wine Awards.

"Our wines have been praised by a host of national experts throughout the year, including both Oz Clarke and Jancis Robinson. Jancis said our wines were 'pure' and made with a 'light touch' whilst Oz



This year's harvest has been another success for Hencote

said he was 'absolutely delighted' with our Evolution sparkling wine.

"We've also shared a stage with Jean-Christophe Novelli at Shrewsbury Food Festival, enjoyed record-breaking levels of bookings for the restaurant and glamping and even welcomed the Real Housewives

of Cheshire onto the vineyard for a day's filming.

"One particularly pleasing aspect of the last year was our decision to join the Shropshire Chamber so that we can play our part in helping the whole of the county's business community as it recovers from the pandemic."

Mark said Hencote would be expanding its corporate offer in 2022 with some exciting new initiatives to support the business community.

"We are currently working on plans which we think will offer something new and unique in Shropshire and which we hope to be able to announce very shortly."

Mark said the coming months would also see the release of the 2021 vintage from Hencote – with hopes high that the quality will equal that of the award-winning 2018 wines.

"The 2021 harvest was slightly lower in terms of yield than that of 2018 but our winemaker Gavin Patterson believes the quality is as good as it's ever been and something to really look forward to.

"When we established the estate here in 2016 we were determined to produce wine which was the equal of anything produced anywhere in the world. Our 2018 vintage showed that we were on the right track and we are confident that our 2021 wines will further enhance our reputation."

To find out more about Hencote visit <https://www.hencote.com/>

Our People Your Team

Here to Help

We continue to offer meetings via telephone and video and where necessary we are able to offer face to face appointments, please use our letterbox when dropping off documents.

Transparently priced, practical advice and support delivered by specialists with foundations in Shropshire

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International accreditation for team at Hollinbrow



Hollinbrow celebrates AS 9100 certification

AS 9100 is the premier, international standard for aerospace and defence engineering. The world's biggest and best known companies such as Boeing and BAE Systems hold AS 9100 certification. Telford's Hollinbrow Precision Products has joined the big league and was awarded AS 9100 in January by NQA Global Certification.

Hollinbrow's founder and Managing Director Jon Griffiths says "I am very proud of our team and want to thank them for their hard work and commitment. AS 9100 is the gold standard for manufacturing and our success shows how, with vision, energy and hard work, small businesses can compete with the very best companies in the world.

The AS 9100 standard requires Hollinbrow to achieve the highest standards for production, product safety, raw material management, measurement, and test and on time in full delivery. Across the world less than 10,000 companies have secured AS 9100 certification.

Stepping out of their comfort zone with an all-new podcast

Shropshire design, branding and communication agency, Branded by Jones, have decided to start the new year by getting out of their comfort zone! Directors Carl Jones & Clare Heighway-Jones are launching a new business Podcast and Vlog. It's intended to be something a little different from the usual 'look at us, we do branding and marketing, we can do that for you!' and the other self-promotional pieces out there.

The podcast is called A little bit of talent and a lot of hard work..! It's named in reference to the career path followed by Carl and Clare – not the individuals who'll be featuring..!

'We wanted to do something a little bit fun, informative and interesting. And to give a voice to our clients, associates, friends, in fact anyone we know and have come across over the years...' says Carl... 'I'll be chatting with people from all walks of life; in fact we already have a tech and web entrepreneur lined up, an old friend who's appeared on stage and screen, a former world memory champion, various Shropshire business leaders and some old colleagues from the international worlds of fashion and design. We even have a couple of aspiring YouTubers and Game designers who have offered to take part (our daughters!).'

The main platform for the series will be as a Podcast, and you can find it in the usual places where you'd find your podcasts. It will also be on the Branded by Jones Youtube channel, with subtitles, as the couple want to make it accessible to anyone.

If you'd like to be featured please drop Carl an email at carl@carljonesdesign.com or get in touch with them via their website at www.brandedbyjones.com. You can also call them on 01694 72 49 49.

Mental health risks for business owners

Small business owners in Shropshire have been reassured help and advice is available as they emerge from the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic.

According to a national survey, a mental health crisis is on the horizon among entrepreneurs as 82% of those questioned said their mental health had declined due to Covid-19, and that the self-employed were worried about a whole raft of challenges.

Now Dave Williams, of Henshalls Insurance Brokers in Newport and Shrewsbury, has urged business owners to seek help.

"The survey was run by small business insurance provider Simply Business, and it revealed 47% of entrepreneurs were worried about their mental health. A third said they had experienced depression, 62% had been affected by stress and 55% had suffered from anxiety. And now, as businesses try to recover from the effects of the pandemic, small business owners are still facing ongoing challenges, but there is help available."

Dave said the Henshalls Group had been using the very latest technology to help support employers and businesses throughout the Covid-19 crisis, and that help was ongoing now the recovery had started.

"We developed a bespoke online portal that was previously only accessible to clients, but as part of our response to the pandemic, we revamped our online presence to make it available to everyone.

"In these difficult times, we felt it was important to do what we could to support local companies, and opening up our portal gives businesses an opportunity to access all kinds of advice that could help them navigate their way through."



The MyWave Connect portal is designed to offer information on health and safety, human resources, risk management, legislative updates and insurance requirements, and it's accessible 24 hours a day.

It delivers automatic timely updates to keep businesses informed of relevant hot topics in the insurance sector and in individual industry sectors, so that they're up-to-date with all the latest developments without having to spend precious time searching the internet.

"Entrepreneurs can access thousands of free articles on all kinds of topics including risk management, risk education, the best ways to communicate with employees, wellness resources, workplace policies, and loss control.

"Given the worrying statistics revealed by the small business owners survey, we hope that business owners make the most of our advice portal to help them deal with the issues they face."

One coat eco-friendly, breathable paint

KEIM Mineral Paints are delighted to exhibit at Futurebuild – the home of innovation.

Here we will be launching KEIM INNOSTAR, our eco-friendly, breathable, one coat interior paint which is perfect for walls, ceilings, quick turnaround, and re-occupancy projects. Available in a rainbow of colour options, it creates an elegant matt finish which is highly durable and easy to wipe clean, perfect for those high traffic areas around the home or office.

KEIM INNOSTAR provides exceptional coverage in just one coat making it quick to use on fresh walls, make over projects or changes to colour schemes.

Let your project breathe

KEIM have been handcrafting sustainable mineral paints since 1878, using natural ingredients to produce rich, and durable products that are kind to you, kind to use and super kind to the environment.

As with all KEIM paints, the original ethos of creating natural, odourless, breathable, and durable products still spans throughout the range, centuries later; you could say we were ahead of our time. Whether that's our KEIM ROYALAN exterior paint, which is ideal for harsh or exposed climate projects, KEIM ECOSIL-ME interior paint which cleverly reduces noxious gases and optimises air quality, or KEIM OPTIL which is perfect for modern or historic projects alike with its intense lightfast colour shades.



Fire resistant paint

Also, on our stand (E68) we will be showcasing our fire resistant paint. KEIM SOLDALIT is our popular exterior paint that meets the rigorous fire safety standard A2-s1, d0 according to EN 13501-1. This replaces the British Standard reference 476 part 6/7, testing to even higher performance levels; put simply it means in the event of a fire the paint coating does not in itself burn or release any toxic chemicals or fumes, and in addition does not support the surface spread of flame.

In recent times, the focus quite rightfully has been on safeguarding residents, to protect them against the risk of fires in high-rises for example, with many existing buildings being re-evaluated for their safety and compliance. Here KEIM Soldalit can provide a cost-effective solution. Once any exterior cladding has been removed, KEIM Soldalit paint can be applied to provide a highly durable fire resistant protection in just a couple of coats.

Currently the UK Regulations only applies to buildings of 18 metres or above, but all manner of structures, such as commercial buildings, houses, flats, hotels, and leisure facilities could reduce the risk of fires spreading by using KEIM.

So, if you live in a coastal located lighthouse, inner conurbation high-rise, or are simply looking to enhance the natural beauty of any project, KEIM has a paint solution to match.

Architects, decorators, contractors, or private homeowners, please come along and discuss your next project with our team on stand E68.

KEIM - playing our part in protecting the environment, since 1878.

If you can't make the show, then get in touch to arrange your no obligation site survey or colour matching service.

Visit www.keimpaints.co.uk for more information.

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Insurance broker welcomes a new member to the team

A Shropshire insurance broker has welcomed a new face to its growing team as part of ambitious growth plans.

Jordan Culliss is the latest colleague to join Henshalls Insurance Brokers, and she will be based at their head office in Newport High Street.

Focusing on commercial insurance, Jordan will play a key role in supporting business clients across the county and the wider region, and she said she's looking forward to being part of the close-knit and professional Henshalls team.

"I have worked in insurance for the past few years, and Henshalls have a reputation that speaks for itself, so it was an easy decision to make when I was offered a new role with them.

"I am very excited about the challenge ahead and I am keen to get started on my Henshalls journey with the aim of developing a strong and productive role for myself within the company.

"Throughout my career, I have always been proud of the high level of customer



Jordan Culliss

service I am able to deliver, and I'm delighted to be able to start working with both existing and new commercial insurance clients to develop my skills even further."

Jordan has previously worked

for commercial insurance brokers in Shrewsbury, and also worked with Henshalls' operations manager Rose Stephen in a former role in the county town.

Henshalls managing director Mark Freeman said: "We've seen a real increase in customer demand for business and commercial insurance advice since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, and we're always looking for new specialists to join us.

"Given the rise in business inquiries, we're very pleased that Jordan has chosen to become part of the Henshalls family, and we're impressed already with the work and commitment she has shown in her new role.

"At Henshalls we are constantly growing in order to keep up with business growth, and we're pleased that once again we've been able to recruit a colleague who has a clear understanding of the local business community and its very specific needs."

Law firm recruits conveyancer amid rising demand for homes

Shropshire law firm mfg Solicitors has appointed a new expert conveyancer to its growing Residential Property team.

Experienced property specialist and licensed conveyancer Danielle Elcock has joined the firm's Telford office where she will assist buyers and sellers with their home sales and purchases at a time when property prices and demand are at a record high.

Mrs Elcock will work closely with partner Andrew Davies, senior associate Nichola Wilson, and head of department Javed Ahmed.

Andrew Davies said: "We are seeing a hugely busy period with properties selling across Shropshire at a rate we haven't seen for many years.

"This has seen us expanding our team to meet this demand and Danielle is the perfect fit. She is widely respected and experienced in all conveyancing matters having led on thousands of transactions throughout her career so far.

"She has settled in superbly and is already successfully leading on a number of transactions for our clients.

Danielle Elcock added: "I have always been impressed by mfg when dealing with its team in the past and I am looking forward to being part of such an established firm which has an excellent reputation not just regionally, but nationally too.

"At such a busy time for the housing market we have the opportunity to grow further so I think it is really exciting to be part of the team here in Telford and working closely with three first-class conveyancers in Andrew, Nichola and Javed."

Qualifying as a licenced conveyancer in 2010, Mrs Elcock is also a member of the Council for Licensed Conveyors.

Readers looking for advice on buying and selling homes can contact Danielle Elcock through danielle.elcock@mfgsolicitors.com or on 0845 55 55 321.



Andrew Davies, Danielle Elcock and Nichola Wilson

New services launched as Q continues to grow



Helen Esslemont



Joanne Wilkinson

A leading Shropshire financial services company has strengthened its team as it continues to expand.

Q Financial Services – which has bases in Wellington and Shrewsbury – has launched new departments dealing with wills and buildings and contents and welcomed Joanne Wilkinson and Helen Esslemont to its team of specialists.

Stuart Mackintosh, Q director, said the move meant the firm could now offer an even wider range of financial advice and support to clients across the West Midlands.

“We have enjoyed a period of excellent growth and have taken the opportunity to add these new services to our range to build on that success and offer the widest possible range of services under the one roof.

“Both Joanne and Helen bring expertise and experience to the Q team and we are delighted that they will be working with us as we continue to grow. We are very excited about the prospects for the year ahead.”

Helen is a widely-respected will writer with a range of qualifications who also has a background in social care.

She has managed the setting up and running of a number of care and support services, supporting thousands of patients and

carers across Shropshire, Herefordshire and Staffordshire.

Outside work she enjoys kayaking and swimming outside in lakes or in the sea and has travelled extensively.

Joanne, has more than 25 years in customer service, estate agency and the general insurance sectors, giving her an expert insight into the buildings and contents field.

Stuart added: “Jo is passionate about the dedicated and bespoke service she offers to her clients, walking alongside them at every step of their journey to ensure their complete satisfaction.”

For more information about Q visit <https://www.qfinancialservices.co.uk/>

Ian steps up at Dyke Yaxley USA

A Shropshire business man who specialises in personal tax advice has been appointed as a new partner – in a firm that’s based in the USA.

Ian Brander is the latest partner to be promoted at Dyke Yaxley USA – an associate company of Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants, in Shrewsbury and Telford.

He will be based here in the UK and will lead the UK-USA personal tax department overseeing the majority of the firm’s 350 UK-USA individual clients,

Ian will also manage a client portfolio of US/UK individuals and businesses dealing with complex international tax calculations.

Managing partner of DY USA, Rob Whittall, said Ian was the company’s first employee hired in 2012, and he’s currently a member of the firm’s management committee.

“When I think about the future of the business, I like to imagine being surrounded by the next generation of leaders who are brilliant at what they do, who can communicate effectively, and who are always looking for self-improvement as well as helping their team members succeed,” said Rob.

“Ian has a pragmatic approach and the ability to make tough decisions based on data while keeping the human side in mind. He is a talented colleague who can humanise the client/accountant relationship and who has long-term knowledge of our clients’ businesses.

“I’m honoured to invite him to join the partnership and look forward to many more successful years ahead together.”

Ian said: “The past ten years have been such an amazing journey and I am thrilled to be working with such a great group of people on both sides of the Atlantic.



Ian Brander

“I’m looking forward to being a part of DY USA’s future and watching the firm and our team members grow.”

Ian joined Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants as an apprentice after leaving college before transferring to Dyke Yaxley USA in 2012, and he’s a fellow of the Association of Accounting Technicians and a member of the Association of Tax Technicians.

He has also completed the EA qualification in the USA and plans to complete the Advanced Diploma in International Trade (ADIT).

Dyke Yaxley USA has recently celebrated its tenth anniversary and the company is uniquely positioned to understand the opportunities, challenges and rising costs facing companies with UK-USA operations, as well as the complexity of planning and preparing taxes for individuals living and working in either the UK or USA.

With offices on both sides of the Atlantic, DY USA’s team of 14 experienced professionals also provide business tax and advisory services both here and in the USA.

BIG goals for 2022



Andrew Hague

We all need BIG goals to ensure we have the best year ever, so what are you planning this year? Whether you want to grow your business or take more time for yourself, these goal-setting tips can help you achieve your long-term plans.

Think big!

What do you want from your life – and how can your business help you achieve that? Think about next year and beyond; what does your business look like in five or 10 years? When you know what end point you're aiming for, it's easier to set goals that move you in the right direction.

Pick something you can measure

Vague goals aren't as helpful as those you can measure and monitor. Think about what you already measure in your business and how you'd like to see those metrics change.

Make a plan to achieve each goal

Once you've picked a few goals, come up with ways to achieve them. It could just be back-of-the-envelope thinking or have a brainstorming session with your team or your advisers (give us a call!). When you have a plan in place, do your best to follow through and make it happen.

Keep monitoring your progress

Check in each month to see how you're tracking with your goals. Set yourself reminders on your calendar or make it part of your invoicing cycle. If you're not quite on track, you can make tweaks or come up with some fresh ideas to help you reach your targets. We can keep you on course and hold you accountable.

Not sure what your goals should be or how to monitor them? We can show you where to find the information you need, how to check on it, or keep an eye on it for you. Our advisory team also has some fantastic ideas on how to reach your goals and build your business. If you would like a chat, please do get in touch.

Andrew Hague, Partner, WR Partners

Back to business at historic hotel

With the lifting of the final Covid restrictions the team at Hadley Park House Hotel can't wait to welcome local businesses back for conferences, meetings and events.

An open day is planned for the 8th March to help organisers make the right choice when it comes to finding the perfect venue for that memorable meeting or entertaining VIP visitors.

Tucked away in the heart of Telford in 2 acres of landscaped gardens, the 18th Century Grade 2 Georgian house has a country house style and is the perfect environment for creative thinking, motivational events or product launches.

Jason Morgan, general manager said: "As an independent hotel we strive to offer top-class experience for everyone and positively relish the challenge of creating tailor-made events from the moment you make an enquiry to the co-ordination on the day, we make sure that everything runs smoothly.

"We have really missed our business guests during the lockdowns although we did manage to host quite a few business events during the summer for individual companies we are now starting to see an upturn in enquires for more open events like networking business breakfasts, recruitment days and exhibitions.

The open day is our chance to show all the different conference room configurations and discuss our day rates and packages. Visitors can sample some of our delicious award-winning seasonal food and take a look at both



Hadley Park House Hotel

our business bedrooms with additional work space and the luxury four poster bedrooms in the original house."

Hadley Park House Hotel has become a firm favourite with many local businesses offering a quiet location with plenty of parking for large business meetings or the intimacy of private dining with an understated style and elegance.

Dorrells Restaurant in the conservatory is the perfect light and airy space for breakfast meetings or business celebrations seating 85. Whilst the modern, self-contained Mulliner suite offers plenty of space for exhibitions, can

host up to 200 people theatre style, 140 for dining or can be divided to create two smaller spaces.

To ensure top class presentations can be delivered and the right impression made, state of the art technology has been installed including a 'wireless' lectern with built-in LCD projector, electronic screen, surround sound, microphones and internet data connectivity.

If you can't make the open day, fellow Chamber members are welcome anytime for a private look around the hotel, just contact us on 01952 677 269 or take a look at our website <https://www.hadleypark.co.uk/meetings/>



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Hayley works for the Furrows Group as a Business Specialist, helping local businesses get the best vehicle, that's fits the company's requirements. Known for her extensive knowledge of electric vehicles regularly called upon to by the BBC and press to comment on this exciting change in the motor industry.

1. Who is someone you admire, and why?

I have two people I much admire. On a personal level my Aunt Jan Marsden, who instilled in to me professional Business values. I also think Sir Jonathan Stafford Nguyen-Van-Tam has been one of the most extraordinary human beings throughout this pandemic. He spoke so eloquently, with such easy-to-understand terms, when we were all grasping to understand this horrific pandemic.

2. Tell me three pet hates?

- *I cannot stand bad customer service, there is simply no excuse.*
- *If you have made a mistake, own up to it and learn from the mistake.*
- *People who park in disabled bays that are not disabled.*

3. Do you have any skills or talents that most people don't know about?

Most people know that I can design. I created an internationally recognised bridal brand that sold all over the world. I worked with many celebrities and prestigious magazines. Not many people know that I am an equestrian. I compete across the country in the demanding exciting sport of Eventing, which consists of Dressage, Show Jumping and Cross County.

4. Who would be your 3 dream dinner guests?

Sara Cox, Miriam Margolyes, Sir David Attenborough.

5. If we went to 'happy hour', what would you order?

I am not a big drinker, perhaps a Gin and Tonic. If I am holidaying it would change to a Bacardi and Coke.

6. What is your favourite holiday destination?

I have been very lucky to travel to some of the most remote regions of the world, not always on the normal holiday wish list. My favourite would be Bhutan in the Himalayas. The outstanding scenery and beautiful people made that a very special trip.



Hayley Jay

7. Name three words that best describe you?

Hard Working, Ambitious and Caring

8. If you were stranded on a desert island what 3 items would you want with you?

Pot of Nivea, knife and shelter (typical red head, always burn)

9. What's a goal you have for yourself that you want to accomplish in the next year either in your personal or work life?

I would like to excel in my work, creating happy customers who will return time after time for new vehicles. In my personal life I just want to be the best rider I can be. The ultimate goal is to be happy.

10. What was the last book you read?

I tend to read books when I am on holiday. I chose articles on a daily basis. I like to gain information and knowledge quickly. My passion at the moment is electric cars, I am always looking out for new technology and ideas.

11. What is your favourite aspect about your career?

I just love helping customers to find the right vehicle, offering exceptional customer service and using my vast network connections to help people.

12. Are you doing the job you thought you would do when you were a child?

I always wanted to be a chauffeur when I was a child, dressed in black with a cap and a shiny black car to polish. Perhaps this is not too far removed from reality.

13. What are some causes you care about?

I have always been charity minded, when I was at school, we were encouraged to support local courses. Through the pandemic when face coverings were scarce, I made thousands to help local business get back to work. This developed in to helping Lingen Davies Cancer charity by making face coverings to boost their depleted charity funds when events could not go ahead.

14. What do you do with friends and family in your spare time?

My life revolves around horses and dogs, most of my friends are wrapped up in that world. I love going to competitions and seeing fellow competitors who I have known for years.

15. What would be your personal motto?

Always do the best you can in everything you do!

Aico announces its first official awards ceremony

Aico are delighted to announce the launch of their very own awards ceremony – the Community Awards.

Designed to recognise excellence within social housing and the local community, the Aico | HomeLINK Community Awards have 11 different categories, all of which are now open to entries, from College Initiative of the Year to the Rising Star Award, the Women in Fire Safety Award to the Best Distributor of the Year, including a Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative award.

Entries close on Thursday 31st March 2022 with finalists announced in early April, ahead of the awards ceremony taking place in May. The inaugural ceremony will be held at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham with host George Clarke, architect, and TV presenter, renowned in the industry. With an evening of celebration, recognition, and entertainment, the Aico|HomeLINK Community Awards will celebrate the achievements of inspirational individuals and organisations working within social housing and the local community; innovating, demonstrating excellence, and putting people first.

Managing Director Neal Hooper comments "We are passionate about supporting the sector as well as our communities, and showcasing inspirational people, organisations and initiatives is a great way to champion excellence, share knowledge and collaborate in the creation of safer homes. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is such a crucial focus for Aico | HomeLINK, forming a key part of our ethos, which is also why we



have launched these awards. It is vital that CSR is advocated, encouraging more involvement from people and organisations in supporting their local communities."

All colleagues are very excited about the inaugural Aico | HomeLINK Community Awards, Neal goes on to say "We are very much looking forward to seeing all of the

entries celebrating the achievements of inspirational individuals and organisations working within social housing and the local community; innovating, demonstrating excellence and putting people first."

To find out more about the Community Awards and to enter, please visit: www.aico.co.uk/events/communityawards2022/

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE WITHIN SOCIAL HOUSING AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY AWARDS 2022



THURSDAY 12TH MAY 2022 | INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE BIRMINGHAM

Funding Innovation in Low Carbon Technologies



We are pleased to advise that the Low Carbon Opportunities Programme is still available to assist businesses in Shropshire!

LOCOP helps develop innovative low carbon technologies or services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Shropshire.

The programme is part-funded through the European Regional Development Fund.

SMEs can apply for grants for up to 40% of the costs of eligible capital or revenue projects. Grants of up to £50,000 will be considered with a minimum grant of £2,000.

Eligibility:

- You must be situated in and trading from Shropshire (or Worcestershire)
- Employ fewer than 250 employees
- Have a turnover of less than the equivalent of 50 million Euros per annum or a balance sheet of less than 43 million Euros
- Be within the low carbon innovation sector

Some industries, such as primary agriculture and certain retail, are not eligible. Other activities excluded are social welfare and education facilities, banking and insurance.

Potential low carbon innovation project examples could include:

- Low carbon product, process or service development
- Commercialisation or implementation costs
- Market research and assessment • IPR protection • Accreditations
- Prototyping, demonstration or testing of new products • Manufacturing scale up or market rollout



Other programme benefits:

- Potential collaboration with CREST UCS (Environmental Research & Business Support programme)
- Opportunities to take part in Programme organised events and forums
- Engagement with other similar types of organisations and further collaboration with both business and academic institutions

Low Carbon Opportunities Programme Team on **01905 843902** or **01905 845398**
or email: sustainability@worcestershire.gov.uk

Supporting Shropshire low carbon businesses to innovate and grow

Growing Greener Together.

CLEAN TECH INNOVATION

- ➔ Support for developing and implementing low carbon ideas
- ➔ Accelerate and commercialise your product, process or service
- ➔ Grants up to £50,000 for revenue or capital projects



Low Carbon Opportunities Programme

The Low Carbon Opportunities Programme can provide grants of up to 40% of the total costs (to a maximum grant of £50,000 for revenue and capital) to undertake low carbon innovation projects.

How does it work?

- Apply for a grant to help develop and commercialise a low carbon technology, product or service that helps others to be green

To qualify, your business must:

- Be situated in and trading from Shropshire*
- Employ fewer than 250 employees
- Have a turnover of less than 50 million Euros per annum or a balance sheet of less than 43 million Euros

*Grants and Advice are also available in Worcestershire

(Please note – some industries such as primary agriculture and retail are not eligible. Other activities excluded are social welfare and education facilities, banking and insurance.)



Grants available for low carbon innovation projects such as:

- Low carbon product, process or service development
- Commercialisation or implementation costs
- Market research and assessment
- IPR protection and accreditation
- Prototyping, demonstration or testing of new products
- Manufacturing scale up or market rollout
- Plant, equipment and machinery

The Low Carbon Opportunities Programme is a partnership between:
Worcestershire County Council • Bromsgrove District Council • Malvern Hills District Council • Redditch Borough Council • Shropshire Council • Worcester City Council • Wychavon District Council • Wyre Forest District Council

Find out more at www.business-central.co.uk/LOCOP
Email info@business-central.co.uk or call 01905 677888



Clean Growth
Worcestershire

Charity launches drug and alcohol anti-stigma campaign

People are being encouraged to seek support for their drug and alcohol addiction as part of a charity's 2022 anti-stigma campaign.

The Kaleidoscope Plus Group launched its Drug and Alcohol Recovery Programme last year to offer support to people across Sandwell and is now aiming to help end the stigma attached to those struggling with their addictions.

Faye Brecknock, Training Services Manager and Project Lead said: "At Kaleidoscope we understand that addiction is an illness, and we are striving to end the stigma around this awful disease.

"We are passionate about championing change and giving people the opportunities, support and services, they deserve to empower them to live happy and healthy lives, free from stigma and judgement."

A video launched this week shows some of those who have been supported by the scheme talking about their experiences of drug and alcohol addiction full video campaign can be seen here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niYmmhOnytw>

One service user featured in the awareness-raising video said: "Before I was using drugs, my life was pretty normal. I had a job working at McDonalds and I was going to school. Then

something happened to me in my teens that led to me getting in with the wrong crowd and I started using heroin and crack cocaine.

"When my dad died, things escalated even more, and it's been non-stop ever since. I have been in and out of jail, it's been relentless.

"I am getting help now, I have a long way to go but I am getting the support I need. I would say to anyone in a similar situation to mine to always seek help because there is support out there."

Another service user said he began taking drugs after he became depressed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

He added: "I'm a single dad so most of my life was pretty normal before Covid. I spent my days doing the school run and looking after my two little boys. Unfortunately, I became really unwell, I got very depressed during Covid and felt very isolated.

"The advice I would give to an addict is to ask for help. If you're struggling just get support because it makes such a difference if you have someone on your side. I hope to become a drug worker now and support people who have experienced what I have and show them that you can recover from this type of thing."

The Kaleidoscope programme offers support sessions for anyone affected by

addiction, including those in recovery, those currently experiencing addiction and family and friends. Courses cover a range of topics, including how to support family and friends through recovery, the five ways to wellbeing, mindfulness, coping with anxiety and depression, creative crafts and confidence and assertiveness.

The interventions are complimentary to those delivered by Cranstoun, which provides the alcohol and drug service for Sandwell residents.

The service was launched with £10,000 funding from Public Health Sandwell.

Mrs Brecknock added: "The impact of addiction on mental health can affect all areas of a persons' life and can be devastating. This may include struggling to manage finances and maintain employment or education, the threat of debt and homelessness, the ability to maintain healthy relationships and in the worst cases, a threat to life.

"We know addiction can be debilitating so this project aims to support people to move forward, develop their sustainable coping skills and reduce the stigma that so many feel and experience in their communities."

For more information about the programme email training@kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk or call 0121 565 5605.

Admired Shropshire lawyer retires and the next generation steps up

A widely respected Shropshire lawyer retires after almost five decades in the legal profession.

Commercial property expert Michael Payne has retired as a partner at law firm mfg Solicitors after a successful career which has spanned 48 years – spending nearly 40 years with the law firm and its predecessor.

Michael, a commercial property solicitor who has been trusted by thousands of businesses and individuals across Shropshire and beyond, began his career at Shrewsbury Borough Council in 1973, qualifying as a solicitor in 1983.

He then joined historic law firm Gwynne & Sons in the same year and rose rapidly through the ranks to become a partner in 1984.

Gwynne & Sons merged with Morton Fisher in 2005 to become mfg Solicitors, with Michael, who has been based in the Telford Office since 1999, becoming a partner of the new-look firm.

With a growing demand for mfg's commercial property services locally and nationally, Michael will be succeeded by experienced fellow partner, David Raymont, who will work closely alongside solicitors Andy Ward and Matthew Allen across the firm's Shropshire offices in Telford and Ludlow.



David Raymont, Michael Payne, Andy Ward and Matthew Allen

Michael said: "I have spent nearly 40 years with the firm and enjoyed playing a key role as it has evolved into a truly nationally respected legal practice across all specialisms.

"Our commercial property department is busier than ever but we have built a superb, first-rate team over the past few years.

"Having such a huge amount of talent has made the decision to retire much easier for me as I know with David and the team, our clients will be in very safe hands.

"After many happy but busy decades in the legal profession, I am looking forward to spending quality time with my wife Wendy, relaxing, and continuing to play an important part in Shifnal Golf Club where I have been a member for the last 40 years.

"I am the club's current Vice-Captain, and

I am deeply honoured to be proposed as the club's Men's Captain from the 1 April 2022."

Mr Payne is well-known around Shropshire and Herefordshire golf community having been chairman of Shifnal Golf Club for five years between 2016 and 2021. He still holds a handicap of 5 and continues to represent the Shropshire and Herefordshire County Seniors team.

Maynard Burton, partner and chairman at mfg Solicitors added: "Michael has been a key architect in the history and progress of mfg Solicitors and he leaves a huge legacy.

"He will be greatly missed by his colleagues and his clients and I would like to place on record again how thankful we are for his friendship, professionalism and superb advice over so many years. We wish him and his family well for the future."

Lubricants industry's role of play in greener future

The lubricants industry must be seen as part of the solution and not part of the problem as the world evolves to a greener, more sustainable future.

That's the opinion of Andrew Goddard, executive chairman of Shrewsbury-based Morris Lubricants, who is the new President of the UK Lubricants Association (UKLA), the voice of the industry.

The UK has committed to carbon neutrality by announcing that the sale of internal combustion engine vehicles and hybrids will end by 2030 and 2035 respectively.

Mr Goddard has warned that the lubricants industry faces significant challenges to its products, customers and markets in the near future but backed the sector's record of innovation to evolve with the changing times to take new opportunities.

Whether vehicles are powered by electric or hydrogen in the future, he says there will still be a demand for lubricants.

"Regardless of the market sector, the future could well be ultra-efficient engines running on low carbon fuels that use bio-synthetic finished lubricants made from sustainable sources," he added.

"We have always been an industry driven by change, from new automotive standards to the advent of synthetic base stocks that underpin the performance of our finished products, and latterly the move to new, sustainable sources of raw materials and



Andrew Goddard, new UKLA President

environmentally-compliant products. It seems that at every turn we are confronted by a new set of regulations and a new set of market standards. I say that is a positive step because a constantly changing environment is essential for companies, keeping us on our toes and ensuring that we remain competitive as our own future survival relies on constant innovation.

"Regulation ensures that we continue to meet market expectations and our customers' exacting standards. Even the ending of the sale of internal combustion engine vehicles will drive innovation built on better performing, multi-purpose oils and lubricants that are environmentally acceptable."

UKLA members are already developing specially tailored lubricants for electric and hydrogen vehicles and new formulations are being manufactured using more sustainable raw materials, such as corn, maize, soya, or even hydro-based.

"The next 100 years will be typified by companies that can capitalise on the fourth industrial revolution," added Mr Goddard. "The nature and characteristics of our society may well change faster over the next generation than they have over previous decades.

"Global economies will still need to manufacture goods, the service economy will still need to cater for people's needs, there will still be mass transportation, international trade will still need to take place and both people and goods will still need to get around.

"Our sector can enable mobility, we can support the free flow of goods across national borders, we can underpin international trade and personal transportation if, and only if, we are seen to be part of the solution and not part of the problem."

Mr Goddard is the second person from Morris Lubricants to become UKLA president, former Chief Executive John Alton having held the post in 2012.

Having been vice president for eight years, he has agreed to become President for two years and has stood down as Chairman of the Verification of Lubricant Specifications, a subsidiary of the UKLA.

"It is a huge honour and I am very proud to be UKLA President," he said. "I must thank Morris Lubricants for supporting me and allowing me the time to give to this important role.

"It's an exciting time with certainly some challenges ahead, but there will also be a lot of opportunities created as well."

Visit: <https://www.morrislubricants.co.uk/our-story/who-we-are> for more information.



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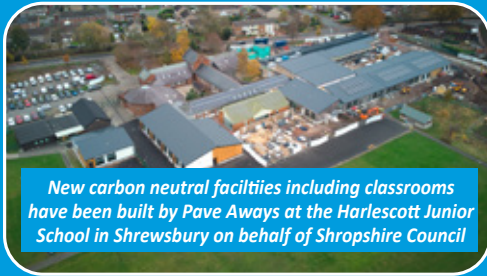
Shropshire-born, Paul Naylor launched MEDIA & YOU in February, 2017. Specialising in the creation of newsletters, magazines and books, Paul is equally at home putting together all manner of business essentials, including:

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Low carbon future lays foundation for construction firm



New carbon neutral facilities including classrooms have been built by Pave Aways at the Harlescott Junior School in Shrewsbury on behalf of Shropshire Council

The drive for energy efficient buildings is fuelling a positive outlook for a Shropshire business as it develops a growing specialism in net carbon construction for the public and private sector.

Pave Aways Building Contractors has worked on high profile projects worth more than £17m for local authorities aiming to reduce their carbon footprint. Most councils in the UK have declared a climate emergency and are looking to partner with firms with a pedigree in low carbon construction on major projects.

The Knockin based firm built the first ever Passivhaus school and social housing schemes for Powys County Council and a net zero carbon extension to Blacon School for Cheshire West and Chester Council in the last 18 months.

This year, it will hand over new carbon neutral buildings at Harlescott Junior School in Shrewsbury for Shropshire Council and deliver the decarbonisation of Newport Leisure Centre to increase the energy efficiency of the facility for Telford & Wrekin Council.

As well as the widely acknowledged environmental benefits of low carbon construction, the increasing call for low, zero or carbon neutral building was having a positive impact on skills locally, said Pave Aways' Managing Director Steven Owen.

"Working on Passivhaus and carbon neutral buildings has helped us to introduce these building methods to our team as well as the sub contractors in our supply chain. This, in turn, is beneficial to the wider community as they can put those skills to use in other projects.

"There is more and more demand for low carbon construction especially on large scale builds and, thanks to our experience in that field, it is giving us a competitive edge. As we saw at COP26, there is a demand for net zero transformation in the sector and we are actively looking at how we can reduce embedded emission," he added.

Despite the widespread supply issues facing the construction industry since Brexit and the ongoing challenges of the covid pandemic, Pave Aways was facing a positive 2022, added Steven.

"In the past two years we have delivered contracts worth £48.5m across Shropshire, Mid Wales, Cheshire and beyond, opened an office in Mid Wales, won awards, supported the communities where we work and stayed true to the values of honesty and integrity that underpin everything we do at Pave Aways.

"We have a healthy order book for 2022 with contracts in a range of sectors and an excellent team to deliver them. The foundation of our business is strong and we look forward to building on that this year."

Five top tips for a greener future

At Wenlock Water, everyone from the Directors to the Delivery Drivers, the Production Line Operatives to the Office Staff are encouraged to think about our environment, the world around us – and how we protect it for future generations.

Wenlock Water have an Environmental Policy in place which the Directors are continually updating and improving in order to meet the latest guidelines and policies.

The Directors farmers and realise that our land will only give back if we nourish and take care of it. As independent business owners, it would have been easy to make compromises on this Ethos – but they hold true to their beliefs. They consider themselves to be custodians of their farm – in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – and recognise that it will be handed down to future generations.

The Directors and staff look forward to continuing their journey of sustainability and promise to uphold their ethos to always put the environment first – there is no Planet B! 99% of the waste at the water plant is recycled, while 46% of energy used comes from renewable energy sources including biomass and solar.

Director, Bruce Orme, has recently issued his Green Manifesto to all staff members, suppliers and partners. It features his Ten Top Tips for a Green Future. Here's the top five:

1. Turn off lights when you leave a room. Think of the savings you could make.
2. Drive less. Don't make unnecessary journeys. Do you need to make the journey? Can you combine it with another errand? Can you vehicle share? Can you cycle or walk?
3. Don't buy things that you don't need. Think about all that stuff you've bought that you've never used. Or used once and it's now in the bottom drawer or the shed.
4. Turn off electrical items that are on stand-by. Does your computer or television really need to be left on standby overnight?
5. Recycle and upcycle more. It's become too easy just to throw things away. It's amazing what you can upcycle and reuse creatively. At Wenlock Bruce is in the process of upcycling some old water fountains into water refilling stations...

If you'd like to find out more about Wenlock Water please visit the website at www.wenlockwatercoolers.co.uk

Part of the family

A Shropshire IT company has joined forces with one of the top providers in the UK - as it extends its team and its offering for county clients.

PC Net Solutions, based in Shrewsbury, has become part of the EPX Technical Services family.

Managing Director Katy Jones said the team could not wait to start working together with EPX after the partnership was officially agreed on December 2.

"PC Net and EPX share a common goal and, through this exciting collaboration, both our team and the team at EPX will have opportunities to reach out to more businesses and continue offering top-quality IT solutions and support for them," Katy said.

"We have known the guys at EPX and have been exchanging knowledge with them for quite a while.

"Our customer care is so important, and it is fantastic to connect with an IT support company as reactive and proactive as EPX are. We are confident that our customers will be happy with the increased range of experience and skills we can offer together."

PC Net Solutions has successfully trading and growing its business client base since 1998 with a focus on professional, friendly and customer-focused care and support.

EPX has been established for over 15 years and has earned an outstanding reputation for professionalism and being trusted IT partners. Recently, EPX has won the 2021 Channel Futures MSP 501 Award and been named as one of the top 25 MSPs (Managed Service Providers)



PC Net Solutions, Shrewsbury, has become part of the EPX Technical Services family

in the UK, along with being ranked 404th in the world.

The newly established partnership also brings many synergies through the use of existing skills, resources and products, and facilitates the exchange of knowledge, training, and development opportunities.

Daniel Ellis, CEO of EPX, said: "We have known Katy and the PC Net team for several years and are incredibly excited to welcome them to our team. The support team is now much larger, with a wealth of experience in security and cloud technology, plus a highly professional approach to customer success."

As a result of this new partnership, the total headcount now stands at 25 staff, and over time PC Net will begin trading as EPX.

"Our clients can be assured that there will be no change to the high standard of service they receive," adds Katy. "The addition of EPX will simply allow us to strengthen our existing range of solutions and introduce additional skillsets and specialisms to the PC Net team."

Kicking off 30th year with top nomination

Shrewsbury's multi award winning travel agency, Peakes Travel Elite, is celebrating 30 years of trading this year. They have received a birthday gift in the form of a top travel nomination this month.

Industry bible, Trade Travel Gazette, have announced that Peakes has been shortlisted as a finalist for Luxury Travel Agency of the Year in the TTG Luxury Travel Awards 2022.

Since 2016 the TTG have shortlisted Peakes as a top 50 travel agency in central England every year, and in 2020 crowned them the UK and Ireland's number one travel agency. Peakes have now been recognised by TTG for offering exceptional service in the luxury travel market. The winner will be announced at a glittering event in London in early March.

Claire Moore, managing director at Peakes Travel Elite, said, "What a way to see in our 30th year! Being recognised nationally as a top agency in the luxury market is a fantastic achievement and reflects how the business has evolved."

Frances Peake set up the business in 1992 from her farmhouse kitchen table. Three years later demand for her services saw the business move into a small unit in the Darwin Shopping Centre, and then into a bigger unit two years later with a team of four travel consultants. In 2001, Peakes acquired luxury specialist Ron Morgan Travel, which brought Claire Moore into the business. In 2007 both companies came together at the Mardol premises, and Peakes Travel Elite as we know it today was born.

Claire adds, "We provide incredible luxury holidays with our exceptional customer service, from cruises to adventure tours with



our trusted operators. To have been shortlisted for this national award is an honour, and after two incredibly challenging years, this news means all the more to the team here."

Peakes Travel Elite are planning to hold a travel inspiration event once a month, where they invite experts from travel operators in to their store. The themed events will include cruises, adventure and touring holidays, and dream destinations. Contact Peakes for more information.

Peakes Travel Elite offer an appointment service Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm, and outside those hours via phone and email.

Visit www.peakestravelelite.co.uk for more details.



You miss 100% of the shots you don't take

Hi, I'm Nick and I am moving into the role of Membership Advisor from my prior role of Kickstart Coordinator. I was born and raised in Shropshire, and aside from the three years living in Liverpool for University I have lived here all my life.

1. Who is someone you admire, and why?

Has to be Sir Alex Ferguson, he was the greatest football manager of my lifetime and was still going strong when he retired at 71 years old.

2. Tell me three pet hates?

1. People who eat with their mouth open.
2. Mayonnaise
3. People who are walking slow in front of me

3. Do you have any skills or talents that most people don't know about?

I am fairly skilled with a set of darts in my hand.

4. Who would be your 3 dream dinner guests?

Liam Gallagher, Kanye West and Roy Keane

5. If we went to 'happy hour', what would you order?

Would have to be a Hazy IPA, or a nice strong cocktail if I am feeling adventurous.



Nick Lineton

6. What is your favourite holiday destination?

Budapest in Hungary is 100% the best holiday destination I have been to - can't go wrong with hot weather and cheap alcohol.

7. Name three words that best describe you?

Relaxed, open, flexible

8. If you were stranded on a desert island what 3 items would you want with you?

Pocket knife, flare gun, and a fully fuelled helicopter

9. What's a goal you have for yourself that you want to accomplish in the next year either in your personal or work life?

available for borrowers in the way of fixed rate mortgages and we are of course always happy to advise any individuals who are concerned about the current increases and the impact this may have on their financial situation."

To learn the guitar

10. What was the last book you read?

A Game of Thrones by George R.R. Martin

11. What is your favourite aspect about your career?

The best aspect of my career is the networking side of the job. Connecting with a wide range of people in a variety of companies can be extremely interesting and I can learn many life lessons from people's experiences.

12. Are you doing the job you thought you would do when you were a child?

As a teenager I always thought I'd become a YouTuber, still yet to make a single video though.

13. What are some causes you care about?

To prevent any form of animal cruelty in the world.

14. What do you do with friends and family in your spare time?

Aside from the regular nights out of a weekend, during the 2020 lockdown myself and my friends were essentially professional Monopoly players.

15. What would be your personal motto?

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

Reassuring households over rising interest rates

One of Shropshire's leading finance companies says homeowners and prospective buyers should not panic over the recent hike in interest rates.

Q Financial Services, which has its offices in Wellington and Shrewsbury, said the increase in rates from the historic low of 0.1% to 0.25% should have minimal impact in the short term.

However Q director Mitchell Gough says further rises are likely in the months ahead as the Bank of England fights soaring inflation – and urged households to review their own budgets in the new year.

"With inflation continuing to rise sharply, we're not surprised by the Bank of England's decision to increase interest rates.

"We're confident, however, the rise won't make too much of a difference particularly against the very low rates we have seen over recent years and households should therefore not feel the need to panic.

"There are still many attractive offers



Mitchell Gough

The Bank of England rate rise – the first in three years – came as new figures showed prices are rising at their fastest rate for ten years with inflation reaching 5.1 per cent.

The Bank has a duty to keep inflation to 2% or lower and acted despite the rapid spread of the coronavirus Omicron variant and the uncertain economic outlook for 2022.

Mitchell added: "We will be watching eagerly to see what happens next. It is likely that further modest increases in interest rates will be needed in the coming months to help the Bank of England achieve its 2% inflation target.

"With this in mind, families already feeling the pinch ought to be prepared for tougher times ahead and we would urge all individuals to undertake a review of their personal finances at the start of the new year."

For more information about Q visit <https://www.qfinancialservices.co.uk/>

Let's get ready to party together at the Quarry

Shropshire's award-winning events team are launching a brand-new festival this year - Shropshire Party at the Quarry Park.

The event will be held in Shrewsbury Quarry on Friday, May 20 and Saturday, May 21 and will be an outdoor festival with local tipples and tasty street food being served up alongside a music stage, tipis, and live entertainment.

Local brewers and producers will be serving real ales, ciders, gin, wine, prosecco, and cocktails. The best bands in the region will be performing on a live music stage, with Shropshire Oktoberfest's popular silent disco tent making a return to the park.

News of the event coincides with Shropshire Festivals pledge to create a million smiles this year across all their events, corporate parties, and community initiatives.

This year alone they plan to hold Shropshire Kids Festival, Shropshire Party at the Quarry Park, Shrewsbury Food Festival, Shropshire Oktoberfest, a Leadership

Conference, and Doorstep Carols, with lots more in the planning stages.

Shropshire Festival's Director of Fun, Beth Heath, said, "Following the fantastic sell-out response to Shropshire Oktoberfest last year, we felt there was appetite for another event in the calendar with a party vibe. After two years of lockdowns and restrictions, we want 2022 to be fun-filled, and we'll make sure there are plenty of brilliant events happening throughout the year.

"We want to mix all the most loved elements of Oktoberfest and Food Festival with sunshine, having a great time with friends in the beautiful parkland at the Quarry, and partying until the sun goes down. Helps us generate a million smiles in 2022 by joining us for a party in the Quarry!"

Shropshire Party at the Quarry Park will be held on Friday, May 20 from 5pm until 10pm and Saturday, May 21 from 11am until 10pm at Shrewsbury Quarry Park.

Early bird tickets can be purchased from www.shropshirepartyatthepark.co.uk

Staycationing boom is predicted for 2022

The chairman of an award-winning Shrewsbury-based leisure company is predicting another staycationing boom in the UK in 2022 due to the continuing global pandemic.

Tony Bywater, from Salop Leisure, which also has sales centres in Machynlleth and Stourport-on-Severn, believes the demand for staycationing will be even greater in the new year, as British people will be reluctant to travel abroad.

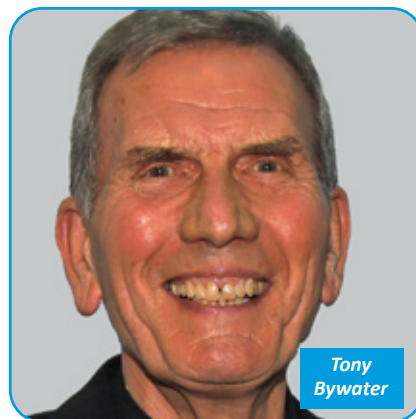
In addition to running one of the UK's most successful caravan and motorhome dealerships, Salop Leisure also owns the Love2Stay resort and adventure centre and Love Plants specialist plants centre in Shrewsbury and caravan holiday home and touring parks across Mid Wales and Shropshire.

Due to staycationing this year, caravan and motorhome sales have boomed at Salop Leisure as more first-time buyers opted to invest in holidays in the UK for the foreseeable future.

One of the biggest challenges the company faced was obtaining enough stock, as caravan manufacturers struggled to keep up with demand.

Many caravan holiday home parks across Mid Wales and the Heart of England reported a huge demand for available pitches, with many reporting a record year.

Having devoted more than 50 years of his life to the caravan and motorhome industry, Mr Bywater has experienced



Tony Bywater

many economic highs and lows and is well placed to offer an opinion on future business prospects.

"I think the business opportunities in 2022 are going to be even greater for our industry," he said. "More people will want to stay in the UK in the next year and demand for touring caravans, motorhomes and caravan holiday homes will be at record levels.

"Demand for holiday locations in the Heart of England and Mid Wales is also going to be massive, leading to a possible shortage of vacant pitches on caravan parks. There is also a chance that the supply of new caravans might not meet demand.

"We look forward to offering help and advice to anyone wishing to buy a touring caravan, motorhome or caravan holiday home in 2022.

£30m expansion blueprint



Aled Ellis and David Needham

A Shropshire-based technology company is setting its sights on an ambitious growth plan that will see it target £30m in sales.

The Needham Group, which operates three specialist laser, coding, and ink technology businesses, has launched an expansion blueprint that will see it more than treble revenues between now and 2025, with the possibility of creating 30 new jobs in the process.

Founded by Roger Needham in 1962, the firm is looking to achieve this target by boosting export activity across its three divisions, increased investment in marketing, extending distribution networks and developing capacity to take on more bespoke projects.

The management team, now led by Managing Director Aled Ellis and Chairman David Needham, is also eyeing several strategic acquisitions that will allow it to increase its capabilities in its core technologies.

"We are continually talking about the fact that the UK does not commercialise enough of the amazing Intellectual Property (IP) we develop – well, we're trying to change that with the launch of these latest expansion plans," commented Aled.

"Over the last three years, we have invested more than £2m in creating the platform for this next phase of growth and this includes doubling the size of our HQ in Whitchurch, a number of acquisitions, increasing our R&D facilities and, importantly for the local area, taking our headcount to 70."

He continued: "Whilst we are looking to transform the size of the business, we want to ensure we maintain our core values that encourage our staff to relish responsibility, be confident, yet humble and to always do the right thing, including understanding how we can leave a positive environmental impact on society.

The Needham Group has grown from a regional distributor of marker pens in the 1960s to a diverse collection of businesses serving more than 30 different markets.

Needham Inks develops, manufactures, and globally distributes inks, solvents and dyes that are used for a wide variety of applications, ranging from marking eggs or meat to high resistance solutions for automotive parts.

New products will play an essential role in the growth of Needham Coding Ireland, which will be responsible for selling the group's expanding product range and technology solutions in the emerald isle.

Aled went on to add: "Our newest business division is Needham Laser Technologies, where we have been selling 'The N-Lase' Laser Marking machines since 2019.

"The focus is on sharing our excitement for British laser expertise in a way that creates lifelong partnerships and develops new innovative uses for this technology.

He concluded: "We are also targeting international expansion, with plans in place to create a global distribution network that could deliver up to £7m of annual revenue."

New Co-op contract for thermal cage liners

Thermal insulation specialist Seymour Manufacturing International (SMI) has gained a major contract with the Co-op which will see products supplied to more than a dozen of its UK distribution centres.

The Telford-based company has had a continued relationship with the Co-op for more than 35 years.

This latest deal includes the supply of over 1,000 Tempro® thermal roll cage liners which will be used to keep fresh bananas in the best possible condition for customers, and to reduce food waste.

This is a new design with improved thermal properties, compared with previous roll cage liners sold in the past.

The first phase of deliveries was completed prior to Christmas, with the entire order scheduled for completion by the end of September this year.

SMI is the inventor of Tempro®, which remains the most thermally efficient material of its kind.

The UK-manufactured liners will reduce wastage of bananas by preventing them from ripening too quickly during Co-op deliveries.

SMI director Jill Seymour said: "Our Tempro® thermal roll cage covers and liners offer enormous savings and benefits when transporting frozen, chilled or ambient products.

"Products such as the Co-op liners are tailor-made to specific customer requirements, and we have been working hard on refining our designs and trial tests for this project over many months.

"We are delighted to be working with the Co-op organisation on this exciting project, which we are sure will make life considerably easier for their delivery teams and provide outstanding thermal protection."

The SMI liners are being supplied to Co-op depots in Andover, Avonmouth, Birtley, Cardinal, Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland, Castlewood, Dalcross, Lea Green, Newhouse, Plymouth, Thurrock, and Wellingborough.

They will also be supplied to Co-op's new depot at Biggleswade which is due to open later this year.

SMI is also supporting the Co-op's distribution teams by providing installation manuals and video demonstrations for the liners, backed up with a menu of spare or replacement parts.

Seymour Manufacturing International has been saving energy and money for some of the world's biggest and best-known businesses since the 1980s.

The company has supplied banana roll cage liners and other products to the Co-op for many years.

SMI's client list is a who's who of blue-chip brands, including other major retailers such as Waitrose, Morrisons, ASDA, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer, and Lidl. SMI also works with the NHS, the Ministry of Defence, and has become a leading thermal insulation supplier for the protection of food, chemicals, agricultural and home delivery products.

The company has its own headquarters on the Stafford Park industrial estate in Telford, Shropshire.

More details can be found online at <https://seymour-mi.com/>

Boost your team's well-being

Team building sessions outdoors are the perfect way to set the tone for your team for the New Year.

Mental health is a topic much more talked about in the workplace. Increasing evidence shows that engagement with outdoor natural environments is beneficial for mental health and wellbeing. Attention to personal resilience and well-being is needed now, more than ever, team away days outdoors can support your team members and at the same time act to get the team in these times of increased remote working.

The approach taken by learning outdoors, naturally supports mental health and wellbeing in two key ways:

- The learning centre is the wilderness - the woodland and dales, that surround the learning hubs, enable delegates to feel totally removed from their day to day and connect to nature and be active outdoors, which both relieve stress and anxiety.

- The comfort zone is tested kindly! Delegates achieve small and big things unconsciously, focussing on self-awareness, confidence and resilience. Skills that they'll bring with them, are enhanced to help them cope better with change and stressful situations.

Establishing a new partnership with international search and rescue, emergency services, and ex-military, Learning Outdoors celebrates its 2 year anniversary, initiated during Covid-19 to respond to the need to use the outdoors more to support those working from home.

The team building sessions offer participants a fulfilling journey whether half day, full day or residential, including leadership, teamwork, and overcoming challenges together. Each session is customised to the client's needs, incorporating as much or as little 'work talk' as is wanted, balancing business deliverables and team motivation in 2022.

On track for fun



SVR has plenty to offer in 2022

The Severn Valley Railway has launched ticket sales for its regular services and three of its major events in 2022, offering visitors the opportunity to get spring off to a great start with a heritage rail journey.

Tickets for the Spring Steam Gala, Spring Diesel Festival, Step Back to the 1940s and regular services will go on sale at 1pm today (Monday 31st January), in advance of the railway reopening on 2nd April.

The Spring Steam Gala is the first special event of 2022. It takes place on 21st – 24th April, and offers passengers unlimited travel behind the best of the SVR home fleet along with at least two special guests from other railways.

There's a change of traction between May 19th – 22nd, as the Spring Diesel Festival promises a full-throttle four-day treat for fans of all classes of heritage diesel engines, taken from the SVR's unrivalled home fleet, alongside three visiting locomotives.

At both these events, the return of the popular multi-day rover tickets means passengers can make significant savings by buying multiple day tickets.

This summer marks the SVR's 27th 'Step Back to the 1940s' event and it's set to prove as popular as always. Last year's event was a sell-out and this year there'll

be more attractions than ever before, as visitors dress up to the nines to enjoy sights, sounds and tastes from the Flyin' Forties.

"A trip on the SVR is all about getting away from the every day," said Michael Dunn, the SVR's head of visitor experience. "We know many people are keen to secure their tickets as soon as possible for our headline events, and we're delighted to have them on sale early in the year.

"For our regular services, we've frozen the price of individual pre-booked tickets at last year's rates, and we're working on some exciting packages for families and frequent travellers, to make sure that heritage rail travel at the SVR is more affordable than ever before.

"We've got a fabulous line-up of things happening this year from model railway weekends, to dance and vintage transport events. We're especially excited about our special four-day celebration for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee from 2nd – 5th June, and with the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games on our doorstep this summer, we're looking forward to welcoming a new audience of visitors from across the world. Keep an eye out for further details and announcements soon, for what are guaranteed to be historic and memorable occasions for the railway and all our visitors."

There's further information and booking details at svr.co.uk or phone the SVR's visitor services team on 01562 757 900.

New tea and coffee liqueurs launched

The Shropshire Distillery have launched two products under their new range of 'After Noon' liqueurs. Their cold brewed coffee liqueur and citrus grey tea liqueur are the first they have released, which are being sold alongside their award-winning handcrafted gins.

The launch of the liqueurs has coincided with a major re-brand for the distillery, who have moved away from being called Shire Gin, to reflect their Shropshire home. The Shropshire Distillery have updated their branding, labels, and bottles, which all have a premium, sleek new look.

Emma Glynn, one of the UK's few female Distillers, called on the expertise of Aroma Tea & Coffee Merchants, based in Shrewsbury, to find suitable blends to use in the liqueurs.

They provided their Charles Darwin inspired Evolution blend for the coffee liqueur. The full-bodied blend represents the evolution of coffee production by including coffee grown from across the globe. For the tea liqueur, they provided their Citrus Earl Grey which is a blend of black teas from China, with added dried orange and lemon peel, and natural Italian bergamot fruit oil.

Emma Glynn said she is very proud of all their recent changes. She said, "This is an exciting, and very busy time for us. We are over the moon to see our new branding in local shops and bars. There can be no mistaking where our spirits are made now!

"The launch of the liqueurs is another historic moment for the distillery, and we believe the After Noon range is a great addition to our offering.

"The cold brewed coffee liqueur has



The new After Noon liqueurs

rich maple syrup, dark chocolate, and hazelnut notes. It is perfect for lovers of Espresso Martinis - there's no need to add coffee or vodka, all you need to do is add water and ice to the liqueur.

"The tea liqueur has a refreshing, citrus taste. You can enjoy it near over ice or make an Iced Tea Spritz with lemonade and sliced oranges. We have already received glowing reviews, with customers enjoying a well-deserved grown-up tea or coffee break in the PM!"

To purchase the liqueurs and the new look spirits visit the website at www.theshropshiredistillery.co.uk.

Thousands of volunteer hours have been pledged



Wrekin staff recently volunteered to help clear the garden at the Parkwood extra care scheme

The Wrekin Housing Group has pledged more than 2500 volunteer hours a year to help local communities and good causes.

Wrekin is actively supporting its employees in their efforts to volunteer across a wide range of activities and causes in their local communities. Staff have been offered up to an extra two days leave a year, dedicated to volunteering.

Wrekin, who provide over 13,000 homes for across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Staffordshire, is also encouraging employees to come forward with ideas of how they can make a difference across the communities we serve.

During the pandemic, many Wrekin staff have given their time to help those in need - including shopping for neighbours, delivering food or medical prescriptions to vulnerable or elderly people, making welfare and befriending calls as well as joining the NHS vaccination effort. Others have taken part in litter picks, volunteered at food banks and supported a wide range of charities across our area.

David Wells, Executive Director of Operations at The Wrekin Housing Group said:

"We are committed to supporting the communities in which both our tenants and staff live and work. We also have a strong tradition of throwing ourselves into fundraising, charity events and volunteering.

"We know that many colleagues want to support good causes of their own choosing - that is why we wanted to give people the opportunity to use a portion of their work time to help out in their local community.

"This is our most ambitious volunteer project to date, and these 2,600 volunteer hours will provide our staff with another fantastic opportunity to make a difference to people's lives."

Shropshire firm makes the shortlist

A Shropshire firm is hoping to win another prestigious national industry title after once again being shortlisted for a major award.

The team from Tudor Griffiths Group, in Ellesmere, are one of three finalists in the Builders' Merchant of the Year category at this year's Builders' Merchants Awards - and it's a title that they have been shortlisted for in previous years too.

Now staff are excitedly awaiting the awards ceremony which will take place at the Westminster Bridge Park Plaza Hotel in London.

TG Builders' Merchants general manager, Mark Evans, said the team was delighted to be shortlisted again in such a high-profile competition.



Mark Evans - TG Builders' Merchants general manager - and Tudor Griffiths

"We have a proven track record of success having previously won Kitchen and Bathroom Showroom of the Year, and Community Initiative of the Year, but the overall Builders' Merchants of the Year Award is really the most coveted title.

"This year we're particularly keen to see if we can win the Builders' Merchant of the Year category, and we can't wait to see what the judges have decided.

"It will also be fantastic to take part in an in-person ceremony again after all the difficulties the pandemic has caused, and we're looking forward to catching up with colleagues from across the UK to learn more about how they've rallied and adapted during such challenging times."

The Builders' Merchant Awards are in their 20th anniversary year, and the winners will be announced in front of over 750 industry colleagues.

The event has been organised by Builders' Merchants News in partnership with the Builders' Merchants Federation.

Business awards are back – and entries are open

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has officially launched its 2022 business awards – revealing a host of new categories to reflect the changing economic climate.

The Chamber unveiled its plans for this year's competition at a launch event held at Salop Leisure, in front of a big gathering of business leaders.

Alongside the business 'Oscars' night on June 10 at Telford's International Centre, there will also be a conference and expo this year, held at the Mercure Telford Centre hotel on June 8.

The Chamber said it was expecting the awards celebration to be its biggest and best ever.

Entries for the awards are now open, with a closing date in early April. All the details can be found on the new awards website, www.shropshirechamberbusinessawards.com

This year's business award categories are:

COMPANY OF THE YEAR: The showpiece award for an all-round star performer, flying the flag for Shropshire business excellence.

BEST NEW BUSINESS: For businesses in any sector, formed since January 2020.

BEST SMALL BUSINESS: For businesses in any sector employing up to 10 full-time equivalent staff, demonstrating a high level of success.

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE: For companies which go the extra mile in looking after the needs of their clients.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE: For companies with impressive export or import track records, and strong overseas links.

COVID RESPONSE AWARD: For any business which has had to regroup, rebrand, relaunch or reposition itself as a result of the pandemic.

MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING: For companies which 'make things' and are continuing our proud industrial heritage.

WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE: For companies which recognise the importance of supporting both the physical and mental wellbeing of staff.

INNOVATION: For companies who have spotted a gap in the market, and thought outside the box to fill it.

SUSTAINABILITY: For environmentally aware businesses which promote innovative practices, processes or technology.

YOUNG BUSINESS PERSON: Open to anyone aged 30 or below in January 2022, who demonstrates flair, commitment and an entrepreneurial spirit.



Shropshire Chamber's team at the launch of the 2022 business awards



Representatives from businesses across the county gathered to witness the launch of Shropshire Business Awards 2022

"The Shropshire Chamber Business Awards are established among the largest events of their kind in the country, and we are so excited to be back," said chief executive Richard Sheehan.

"Alongside our traditional categories like company of the year, best new business and best small business, we have added new categories which reflect the challenges Shropshire businesses have faced.

"In addition to this, our conference in the build-up to the awards will give us the chance to bring top-level speakers to the county, to tackle the issues that matter to our local business community."

Launched in 2001, the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards have attracted audiences of up to 900 people for the black-tie celebration.

Mr Sheehan said there seemed to be a huge appetite for a return to the awards gala night for the first time since 2019. Judging by the huge level of advance ticket sales he said it was looking set to be a sell-out.

More details about the conference and expo programme – as well as the celebrity guest speaker for the awards night – will be announced in the coming weeks.

Crowds gather to celebrate return of the awards



WPG increase services with branded Workwear

WPG have seen many changes during 2021, the main one being a huge increase in supplying personalised workwear.

Paul Jones, joint MD, says "Having been known as one of the largest litho & digital printers in the area, diversifying into clothing has complemented our services perfectly".

This all started when we were approached to personalise facemasks for our local businesses. The feedback we received and the recommendations that followed led us into supplying more and more.

Word got out and before we knew it, we were supplying whole uniforms to many businesses. From there, we naturally progressed into promotional products and the rest shall we say is history . . ."

WPG are now very proud to offer a complete print solution. Their services include printing, direct mail, signage, workwear and promotional products, they even supply & engrave trophies and awards!

WPG can ensure the consistency of company logos and branding across all products

Call the sales team on 01938 552260 or email sales@wpg-group.com



Branded facemasks



The complete print solution

HGV Skills Bootcamps

Telford College is launching a new series of 'Skills Bootcamps' to help train up a fresh generation of HGV drivers.

The college is offering seven different HGV training pathways as part of the Government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee, which is designed to help everyone gain 'skills for life'.

They include 'back to wheels' refresher programmes to help drivers return to previous roles, opportunities for existing drivers to upskill and upgrade, and a choice of 'novice to category C' programmes for newcomers to the sector.

The Skills Bootcamps are open to both employed and unemployed adults. Full details of the seven different pathways on offer through Telford College can be found at telfordcollege.ac.uk/skills-bootcamps

Claire Barker, Telford College's assistant principal for employer engagement and skills, said: "We are delighted to have been chosen to help deliver these important and timely programmes.

"Skills Bootcamps are flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

"They are being delivered in partnership with employers, providers and local authorities, to help people gain skills for life, support skills demands in their local area, and ultimately to help people get a better job.

"There is a task to raise awareness, understanding and uptake of these exciting new courses – we want to work with the public, employers



Claire Barker



Antony Steadman, Graham Guest and Jane Robson at Telford College

and stakeholders to build some real momentum around this innovative reskilling model."

The HGV Skills Bootcamps build on Telford College's already established Sector-Based Work Academies which are already up and running in partnership with employers and driver training agencies.

The free courses are available to anyone over the age of 19 who is actively seeking employment, and in receipt of either universal credit or jobseekers' allowance.

Claire said Telford College was committed to doing everything possible to solve problems caused by a lack of qualified drivers which is causing serious disruption to the UK's logistics and delivery chains.

Doors to a legal career

A Telford College business administration student is on the way to becoming a qualified solicitor after completing her apprenticeship with a county law firm.

Amy Clennell, originally from Shawbirch and now living in Lawley, has finished a level two apprenticeship with Fodens, and is now studying a Bachelor of Laws degree through the Open University.

The 20-year-old, a former Charlton School student, said she had considered going to university after her A levels – but decided the chance to earn a wage and gain work experience was a better option.

"University really isn't the most important thing in the world; I think apprenticeships are a really good place to start," she said.

"I believe that I am two years ahead of where I would otherwise have been now if I had gone to university."

She added: "I feel that I have been very lucky securing this apprenticeship. It's a really good stepping-stone, and there are so many options for me.

"The more experience people have from the ground up, the better – my apprenticeship with Telford College worked really well, and I feel this is a really good way to get into law."

Fodens, which has a business centre at Lawley, just off junction six of the M54, is a strong supporter of apprenticeships and the benefits on on-the-job training.

Director Kelly Davies herself completed an NVQ in business administration before progressing onto several other law courses in conjunction with her work.

Chris Field, from Telford College's employer engagement team, said: "Amy's story is a perfect example of the wide range of career opportunities that a business administration apprenticeship can open up.

"It's a fantastic way to start your career by gaining knowledge of an industry that you're interested in, then seeing where the journey takes you.

"Somebody could start in business administration and then go into marketing, HR, sales, health and safety – and lots of other areas. It's a very useful course for learning about how a business works."

He added: "We've got a number of business administration vacancies at the moment, so this is a good time to create the foundation for a successful and rewarding career."

Telford College currently offers 38 different apprenticeships, and has links with around 700 employers.

For more details about the latest apprenticeships available through Telford College, www.telfordcollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships



Amy Clennell

Giving Shropshire companies the 'Knowledge' to succeed

The award-winning media team behind Shropshire Business Live TV is launching a new online portal to help local companies share the secrets of their success.

SBLTV Knowledge will be a free-to-access companion service to the monthly live streamed TV show, providing an interactive archive of news, views and top tips for local companies.

The aim is to put businesses directly in touch with each other to exchange advice, or ask questions, as well as building up a jargon-busting library of business support information.

There will also be opportunities for businesses to share best practice, take part in polls, and access in-depth discussions, masterclasses and mentoring sessions.

And the portal will include a wide range of impartial live, pre-recorded and downloadable content – in written, audio and video form – compiled and moderated by the team which delivers SBLTV.

SBLTV Knowledge is being developed by Shrewsbury-based multimedia and event production company Yarrington, working in partnership with Shropshire Business magazine, and online news and entertainment service Shropshire Live.

It has been funded by Shropshire Council's Economic Recovery Programme, working in association with The Marches Growth Hub Shropshire. The programme was set up to meet local economic need following the Covid-19 pandemic and deliver Shropshire-wide business outcomes.

Carl Jones, editor of Shropshire Business and one of the SBLTV presenters, said: "We hope this will be a useful addition to the range of services already on offer from business support agencies across Shropshire.

"This is not about competition, but collaboration. We are creating a bespoke, dynamic and editorially independent information sharing portal which can signpost help, advice, partnership working and networking opportunities.

"We want to showcase people's views on issues such as work-life balance, create a forum for discussion where no-one is judged, and help companies to connect with local suppliers – keeping the 'Shropshire pound' here in the county."

Chris Pritchard, editor of Shropshire Live and another of SBLTV's presenters, added: "Our monthly SBLTV show will continue to offer a blend of entertainment and information.

"SBLTV Knowledge will complement this by providing a portal for information and impartial tips – delivered by Shropshire businesses, for Shropshire businesses."



Carl Jones and Chris Pritchard launch SBLTV Knowledge

The free service, which is due to launch in March, will include first-hand stories from a wide range of successful Shropshire business people, including their top tips for success and lessons learned along the way.

There will also be 'mythbusting' articles which seek to set the record straight over common business misconceptions, and easy-to-understand video 'how to' guides, offering practical advice, and exclusive video content.

The service will also be actively seeking to share useful business support information from other organisations and agencies.

Mark Allsop, managing director of Yarrington and director of the SBLTV shows, said: "Using our combined multimedia expertise and facilities, we want to bring together like-minded businesses for mutual benefit.

"The site will be built around five basic pillars – business information to watch or read, interactive elements where companies can get involved, useful resources, personal

support and development, and up-to-date news on topical talking points."

Emma Chapman, manager for the Marches Growth Hub Shropshire, added: "We are thrilled to be supporting this project through our economic recovery programme.

"The team behind SBLTV are dedicated to helping boost the county's businesses and this portal sounds the perfect way to help them share learning and grow.

"Countywide, this programme of support has backed numerous projects to the benefit of both the economy and community and this looks to be another real winner."

SBLTV Knowledge will be seeking to work closely with other business support organisations, offering a platform to share and link to their own resources.

All businesses across the county will be encouraged to take ownership of the information which is made available on the free-to-access service, by helping to populate the portal.

Content will be moderated by the SBLTV Knowledge team of award-winning writers, editors, developers and designers.

The portal is also being seen as a valuable inward investment showcase for Shropshire, giving potential investors a chance to find out more about what our county has to offer, and ask relevant questions.

All businesses across the county will be encouraged to take ownership of the information which is made available on the free-to-access service, by helping to populate the portal

Paramedics inspire Adam's career change

Aico are proud to announce that they will be supporting Shrewsbury-based charity, Little Stars Baby Bank for 2022 through their Charity of the Year initiative.

Little Stars Baby Bank is a new charity, founded in July 2020; their mission is to help parents in need of essential baby items through generous donations from the community, helping to give children the best possible start in life. Since its inception, the charity has supported over 150 families and distributed over 5,500 preloved essentials to those in need.

Recognising the importance of the support that Little Stars Baby Bank provides for families across Shropshire, Aico began their support to the charity in 2021. Initially, Aico colleagues assisted with the creation of marketing material, including designing a roller banner and offering their video recording equipment to film a promotional video. After working alongside Little Stars Baby Bank, and seeing first-hand how much this service was needed within the county, Aico have committed their continued support throughout 2022.

In order to help the charity to achieve its wider, long-term goals, Aico colleagues will continue to support through fundraising, volunteering and offering space within their headquarters for Little Stars Baby Bank to store its



Jane Pritchard, Community Liaison – Aico, Leanne Simcoe – Founder of Little Stars Baby Bank and Lily Ellis, Community Liaison – Aico

donations. Extra storage space will allow the charity to extend its service to young children who are in need of school uniforms, winter clothing and footwear.

Leanne Simcoe, Founder of Little Stars Baby Bank comments, "Our partnership with Aico is extremely special. The support and dedication they provide not only to ourselves but across the charity sector is second to none.

Little Stars is a relatively new charity and to have a strong partnership with

Aico means a great deal to us. Aico's support has given Little Stars the confidence to grow more than we ever thought possible within our first year.

The most important thing to me is how Aico understand the impact of having a baby bank in Shropshire and how our service supports little ones to have the essentials they need. Without their partnership we wouldn't have reached as many families as we have – thank you Aico!"

Supporting clients

Long-standing Shropshire Chamber Patrons Barringtons Chartered Accountants in Newport and Market Drayton has launched a new series of information bulletins to support clients and the wider business community as the pandemic continues to present challenges in 2022.

January's issue was hot off the press with news of the Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Scheme relaunched for small and medium-sized businesses to claim back from the government as well as advice for pregnant employees during the crisis, the latest on private test providers and important upcoming tax deadlines.

Throughout the health crisis Barringtons has lived up to its role as members of the Accountants for Good programme offering sound financial advice and a shoulder to lean on.

It has ploughed extra time and resources into helping the Shropshire business community remain strong to weather the storm and gain access to Bounce Back Loans, Restart grants, Research and Development tax relief and various hospitality support



Barringtons managing director Phil Wood with Chamber CEO Richard Sheehan

packages. Team members have been on hand to help unravel the often complex Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and calculate lifeline Self-Employed Income Support Grants.

With more uncertainty on the horizon in 2022, Barringtons remains on hand to advise on Covid-related support, such as the latest Omicron hospitality and leisure grants, as well as January's deluge of tax related-enquiries.

With several decades of experience, tax is an area where Barringtons really shines. The firm is expert at helping everyone, from business start-ups to established businesses, minimise their tax liability and achieve business goals. Strategic planning is another, really key to success this year and beyond.

Managing director Phil Wood said:

"Two years on and things are still tough for many local businesses. There is much in the 'uncertainty' pot to consider in 2022 and we are currently helping clients with planning reviews to ensure they remain robust and ready to overcome challenge.

"That said we are continually amazed at their resilience and how they have energetically repurposed or pivoted their businesses into new areas, products and services.

"It makes good sense to do so. The past two years has taught us all to expect the unexpected and if you need assistance creating or revising your financial plans, growing your business or just a chat about how to move forward, do not hesitate to contact us."

Barringtons is committed to working with clients in a new way as part of the worldwide Accountants for Good programme, dedicated to building a better future for everyone. Locally the firm fundraises for Severn Hospice in Shrewsbury and sponsors football and rugby in Market Drayton and Hodnet.

It offers a comprehensive portfolio of accountancy and taxation services to help Shropshire businesses flourish and create new jobs and prosperity.

Follow on Facebook and Twitter for newsletter links and useful information in a digestible, non-jargon format - or call for a good old-fashioned chat: Market Drayton office 01630 698017 or Newport 01952 811745.

Help needed to meet growth plans

A Shropshire charity committed to helping young people develop and maintain their physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing is asking for help and calling on companies to name them as their charity of the year for 2022.

SYA (formerly Shropshire Youth Association) has exciting growth and development plans for next year but needs support in delivering the invaluable services it provides to a growing number of young people across Shropshire.

The charity engages with about 6,000 young people each year, helping to provide the opportunities and skills needed to meet future life challenges and enabling them to realise their full potential.

Richard Parkes, SYA Chief Executive Officer, said: "These are exciting times for the charity and news of our growth and development plans for 2022 is a perfect time for the wider community to get to know SYA better.

"SYA who are 'All About Youth' has never been stronger than it will be next year. With the launch of a new website, increased youth activity and a fresh focus on media and communications, we are set to hit 2022 running.

"The work we do supports youth activity across the geographical county of Shropshire enabling young people to build life skills, improve their wellbeing, build stronger communities, develop employability skills, and also helps reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

"We seek to achieve this by working to



fulfil our vision that "Every young person in Shropshire (both unitary council areas) has access to appropriate, affordable and quality leisure activity".

"This might be via a local youth club, scout group, youth project, or mental health drop-in centre - all good examples of how and why SYA is engaging with about 6,000 young people across Shropshire each year.

"We need help to keep this essential work going and to meet our goals of expanding the service we provide, so we are looking to build relationships with companies and individuals who are interested in supporting us in the development of young people.

"Would it suit your company to be aligned to SYA in 2022 by choosing us as your charity of the year? Could you offer a leisure activity to be delivered at a youth club? Are you able to sponsor an element of our celebration event in March? Could SYA help you with safeguarding training if your work involves young people? If so, we would love to hear from you."

Mr Parkes said cash donations to the charity can be used in many ways for the benefit of the young people SYA is supporting.

"£5 provides the refreshments at a youth club for a week or the night's hire of an encaustic art set with all the materials," he added.

"£10 pays for fabric pens for an arts activity

or squash for a youth club over the course of a term, while £20 covers the cost of ingredients for a youth club cooking activity or the BBQ coals and food for an outdoor event.

"£50 helps us buy sports equipment to get young people more active or would pay for a coat a young person could borrow for an outdoor activity, £100 pays for a computer tablet for use at a youth club or a voluntary youth club's annual insurance premium, and £500 would help a young person deliver a health-related piece of social action as a Young Health Champion, or provide an inter-club activity such as a day's fishing at a lake.

"£1,000 would provide a residential experience for a youth group or fund the hire of a village hall for a youth club over the year, £4,000 allows us to run two holiday activity clubs for SEND Young People or provide a qualified youth worker to run a youth club with community volunteers for a year.

"£10,000 pays for a fully-staffed youth club for a year or would run a Heads-Up Health & Wellbeing project for a year in a school setting, while £12,000 covers the leasing of a nine-seater vehicle for three years or pay for the running of a fully-staffed youth club for a year including holiday activities."

To get involved in helping SYA with the work it is doing in Shropshire, contact Emma on fundraising@sya.org.uk

Sign up to enjoy a walk and talk

Local charity, Climbing Out, is looking for people who would benefit from attending their monthly walk and talk days, which aim to help people rebuild their motivation following a physical or mental trauma.

The charity has found the pandemic has increased the need for their work. In 2021 alone they helped over 100 individuals with their mix of outdoor activities, mental resilience coaching, teamwork, camaraderie, fresh air, fun and one-to-one support.

During tougher Covid restrictions, when Climbing Out couldn't hold their residential programmes, they launched 'Walk and Talk Days' to get people active, reduce social isolation and build mental resilience. The days were a success, so they have continued. In 2022 they will hold one a month in Shropshire and are eager to hear from people who might benefit from signing up.

Charity founder, Kelda Wood, leads a small group on a 4-hour walk, at a pace to keep things achievable for everyone. The walks are open to anyone aged 18 years and over, who has been through a mental or physical trauma.

Kelda Wood said, "We've found that combining fresh air, exercise and the conversation of people with relatable experiences, is a really good starting place to build the confidence to move forward with more purpose and direction.

"It's a simple concept that has already had a big effect on our attendees. After our walk we usually finish at a café for a brew, some cake and a chat. The social side reminds us how important it is to connect with other people.

"Next year the Walk and Talks will be based in Shropshire, and we'll be running at least one a month throughout the year. The days out are fully funded, you just need to provide your own transport to the meeting point, food for lunch and come wearing suitable gear for walking."

The dates that have been released so far are Thursday 13th January, Saturday 26th February, Thursday 31st March, Saturday 30th April, and Thursday 26th May. More dates will be announced in the spring.

A previous attendee of a walk and talk day, Emma, said, "I left the day feeling energised and realising there is so much that I can do if I just push myself." Sam adds, "I started the day nervous, scared, head racing about everything that might go wrong and finished the day feeling fantastic, proud and smiling, determined that I can achieve things that I never thought I could."

Kelda adds, "2021 has been an exciting, busy, and amazing year! Despite all the challenges everyone has faced, we've still been able to support people to find a new sense of purpose, motivation and direction, to move forward beyond their trauma with hope and a sense of control. As well as our walk and talk days, we have eight 5-day programmes lined up throughout 2022, and we'd love to hear from anyone who needs help post mental or physical trauma."

If you are interested in attending one of the Walk and Talk days, contact Jo on admin@climbingout.org.uk or complete a referral form found on the 'Walk and Talk Days' page on the website at climbingout.org.uk

Whitchurch prepares to spring to life to commemorate work of a local hero

The town of Whitchurch is preparing to host the inaugural Caldecott Arts Festival next month in honour of a local legend.

The family friendly festival will be held on Saturday March 19th, and is set to honour the life and works of Mr Randolph Caldecott, who, from his humble beginnings in Whitchurch in the mid-1800s, went on to become one of the most world-renowned artists in his field and whose works have inspired the next generation of illustrators such as the incredible Beatrix Potter.

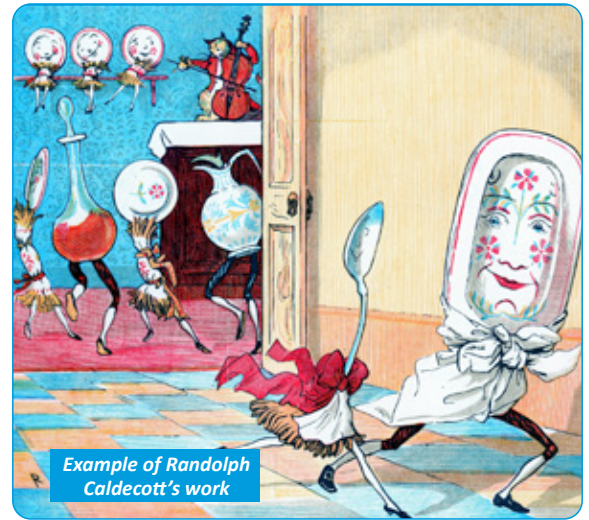
The event has been organised by Dr Norma Raynes, Executive Director of From Generation to Generation, and her team of "Caldecotters", all of whom are inspired by the artist's work and integrity.

The one-day event will take place at various locations across the town, and has attracted the attention of the international art community with esteemed American author Leonard Marcus set to fly in from New York to share his thoughts on Caldecott's works and linking live to the US as part of the event.

Norma Raynes, said, "We are so very excited to be bringing this festival to the people of Whitchurch, Shropshire and the Border counties, as well as those from further afield, for the very first time. Whitchurch was



Norma Raynes
(photo: Howard Barlow)



Example of Randolph Caldecott's work

home to this world-renowned illustrator, yet so many people aren't aware of his wonderful work and we want to change that with the launch of this fabulous event.

"Caldecott inspired all of us to not only follow our dreams but to understand that giving up is never an option. His influence goes further than his illustrations and we are so happy to honour his life and works in this way.

"There will be bookable events throughout the day such as illustration and cartoon workshops, drawing competitions

and art activities, as well as an exhibition of Caldecott's work, and so much more. It's a hugely family friendly day out and we hope everyone will come along to the festival and enjoy all that the day has to offer."

Caldecott Arts Festival is completely free to attend and will take place on the 19th March 2022, when the bells of St Alkmund will ring out at 10am to herald the opening.

To find out more about the Caldecott Arts Festival and how to get involved please email Info@Caldecottfestival.org.uk or call the team on 07900051215.

Major recruitment project offers support

A major project has been launched across Shropshire to provide recruitment support to businesses and get scores of people back to work following the Covid pandemic.

The Building Shropshire project will provide targeted job brokerage services to at least 27 individual companies across the county to help them fill vacancies and reduce unemployment levels.

Businesses operating in the construction, retail, hospitality, and care sectors will be the first to benefit from the year-long initiative that is being led by Shropshire Chamber member Landau.

Caroline Richardson, Head of Employment Services at the Wellington-based supported employment and training charity, said: "This is an exciting new project and one that will help businesses build back stronger by ensuring they are staffed appropriately to deliver their services and products.

"We know from talking to businesses in certain sectors that recruitment is currently a big issue. Part of our role will be to try and understand better the challenges employers are facing and work with them directly to find individuals with the right skills so they can continue to operate successfully.

"Our work will involve advertising job vacancies for businesses and using our



Caroline Richardson

network of contacts and partners to match skills.

"Throughout the year, we will be holding a number of pop-up 'Job Shops' in rural communities across Shropshire to reach unemployed individuals. We will also run skills assessment days on behalf of the employers we are working with as well as support individuals with CV and interview preparation.

"It's a challenging time for all at the

moment, both individuals looking for work and businesses that are still recovering from the impact of the pandemic but hopefully together, through this project, we can build back stronger."

The Building Shropshire project is being delivered by Landau in partnership with Shropshire Council with funding from the new ARG Business Recovery Scheme.

Councillor Ed Potter, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning, said: "Shropshire Council is very aware of the recruitment difficulties some businesses in Shropshire are experiencing but are looking forward to seeing this pilot scheme, supported by some of the county's COVID recovery funding, making a positive impact."

Each year, Landau supports around 3,000 individuals back into the workplace or into training schemes through its specialist support services.

Earlier this year, the organisation was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Promoting Opportunities to those facing social mobility barriers.

For further information about the Building Shropshire project email employerservices@landau.co.uk or contact 01952 245015. Further information about Landau can also be found at <https://www.landau.co.uk/>

Renovation of The Ark

Local developer SY Homes donated their time and expertise as part of a renovation plan. The team cleaned, repaired and repainted the exterior. New windows were fitted to meet safety standards. The pub signage was replaced with The Ark's new logo. The surface of the gable wall was prepped for the stunning new mural by local artist Matt Sewell. The fresh exterior will give a warm welcome to agencies and visitors using the new space, and improve the aesthetics of the street scene along Castle Foregate.

SY Homes called on their business contacts to help, showing how local businesses can work together. Monks Properties gave a generous donation, local scaffolders Pole Position provided the support, and new signage has been donated by Sign and Poster.

"Improvements to the exterior of the building were outside of our budget, so it is fantastic to get such generous support from SY Homes and their team. We really feel welcomed into the local community", said Emily Bell, Chair of The Shrewsbury Ark.

The new mural fills the side of a three-storey building and is visible from the train lines passing through Shrewsbury station, as well as all traffic and pedestrians using Castle Foregate. Elegant, charming, and by far Matt's largest work to date, the mural will undoubtedly become a new landmark for Shrewsbury residents and fans of street art. Paint was sponsored by Shrewsbury BID. Matt's witty, colourful designs of birds and wildlife adorn many corners of Shrewsbury. For details, please contact Matt via his website.

For information on the new Ark logo, please contact Emily Bell, Chair of The Shrewsbury Ark.



The Ark renovation thanks to SY Homes

The ASYSTED Business Programme

Shropshire Youth Support Trust's (SYST) mission is to empower young, disadvantaged people into sustainable self-employment or employment. SYST also use this as a tool to help raise self-esteem, self-value and build aspirations.

The idea of starting a business can be daunting, especially if you're starting. The charity help with the process of starting-up through their ASYSTED Business Programme, which aims to provide the beneficiary with a bespoke journey to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to run a business.

One of the charities' beneficiaries has been using the most from SYST's services. In July, Alex Leighton first joined SYST on their ASYSTED Business Programme and has hopes to start her own Embroidery Business. Threadway Embroidery is the creation of Alex, who founded the company to create a range of bespoke products and services.

Alex's journey has been filled with numerous loops and hurdles, completing large amounts of our programme in such a short space and time, even acquiring a business mentor. The eagerness and dedication are something the charity loves to see from its beneficiaries. Jason Fullwood, a member of the SYST team, has worked closely with and supported Alex on her journey so far. He said the following: "I am amazed at the commitment from Alex. So far, she has completed most of our Core Modules and has taken advantage of the sub-modules based on various business start-up support. Additionally,



she has taken part in our wellbeing and mindset support".

Chief Executive of the charity, Richard Nuttall, added, "A vital part of the ASYSTED Programme part is the opportunity for the ASYSTED Business, in this case, Alex, to have a mentor allocated to her to give her ongoing business and personal holistic support. This support helps greatly with building the confidence and self-esteem of the young people we support. We are very grateful for the support of our volunteer mentors, most of whom are from locally based businesses".

Alex has also presented to the charities' own dragon den style panel, called the ASYSTORS. In this mentoring and funding project, the charities beneficiaries can gain valuable insight and a grant, if necessary, from local and well-established Shropshire and Telford based businesses. The ASYSTORS project is managed and led by Marketing expert and Trustee, Mike Paul but her journey is far from over, as she intends to return to the panel in 2022 for funding. During these panel sessions, the beneficiary gets feedback on their business. Also, steps are suggested, including allocation of a specialist mentor/consultant to the ASYSTED Business.

Speaking of her experience with SYST,

Alex has said the following: "Working with SYST to start my business had been a brilliant opportunity for me. The workshops I've done have taught me a lot about the logistics of running a business and kept me motivated on my business journey. SYST were able to set me up with a mentor, and through this, I've been given even more support that I otherwise wouldn't be able to access."

Anthony Morris-Eyton, The High Sheriff of Shropshire, kindly visited SYST and Alex was present to meet him. She was reflecting on her experience.

"Meeting the High Sheriff of Shropshire was a great opportunity. I was able to learn a lot about the work he does and how he can help local charities like SYST and share my story with him.

"I decided to start Threadway Embroidery because I'd recently become unemployed and wanted my next steps to be something I'm truly passionate about. I chose embroidery because I've always loved creative work and had some embroidery experience.

"I would not have progressed as much as I have without the support from SYST. Threadway Embroidery specialises in personalised gifts, and I love being able to talk through ideas with all my customers."

Tickets remain available for a Charity Ball & Awards Night

Local charity, Climbing Out, are holding a Charity Ball and Awards on Saturday 21st May at Shrewsbury Town Football Club and tickets are still available.

The event has a 'roaring 20s' theme and will include a delicious 3 course meal, inspirational stories for the recipients of 9 awards, a promise auction with 'money can't buy' prizes, dancing to live music from the Vegas Hooligans, and a special performance from one Climbing Out member.

Enjoy all that for just £40 per ticket, or book a table for 10 for £350.

Climbing Out have waited

2 years for their 10th Anniversary Ball, so they intend to make it count!

Email admin@climbingout.org.uk to secure your ticket.



Improving lives with fund

A Shropshire charity is set to invest £30,000 in new standing frames as part of its commitment to helping children with movement difficulties through a unique and life-changing therapy.

The Movement Centre, based in Oswestry, will be ordering 10 Leckey 'Squiggles' Standing Frames next month.

The investment has only been made possible through grants awarded by the National Lottery and HSBC, meaning it will be able to reduce the cost of treatment for families with children undergoing therapy on the programme.

A 12-month course of treatment would normally cost parents £3,950, however, this investment has enabled The Movement Centre to pass on the savings immediately to the families and the cost of the treatment is now £2,000.

The centre is giving children the chance to gain more control of their movement and reach their full potential through Targeted Training therapy, the only therapy of its kind in the world - with standing frames playing a vital role in the process.

Treatment has been helping to transform the range of movement of children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities affecting their mobility for more than 25 years. It helps children with movement such as gaining head control so that they can interact with those around them, sit unaided and can lead to gaining the ability to walk.

The Movement Centre does not receive any funding from Government



or the NHS and is dependent on its extensive fundraising activities and the generosity of grants, awards and donations to continue its essential work.

"The therapy we provide really does make a life-changing difference to a child and their families," said Sarah. "Even though therapy courses are subsidised by our charity, many families often need to fundraise themselves to fund the rest of the programme."

The charity is always looking for fundraising support from people across the area including corporate organisations who could nominate the organisation as their charity of the year or simply host one event for the charity.

For more information about The Movement Centre, visit www.the-movement-centre.co.uk email curtis@themovementcentre.co.uk or call 01691 404248.

Rescue missions must go on

A child with learning difficulties missing from school, an 85 year old dementia sufferer walked out of the home, a potential suicide, a lonely cry for help left in a parked car.

We are West Mercia Search and Rescue, a totally volunteer charity with bases in Bridgnorth and Kidderminster, ready to respond 24/7 from the heart of our region.

Our purpose to search-locate-rescue vulnerable adults and children.

Trained to carry out urban, riverbank, hillside and woodland searches. We operate powerboats, Swift Water wading teams and Kayaks. We deploy Quad bikes and Drones. The River Severn is the main artery of our area; more and more of our call-outs are for people last seen near the river.

We were deployed, during the 2020 flooding in Tenbury Wells, Hereford and Shrewsbury with one team being sent to support DEFRA operations in South Wales. We have remained operational throughout the COVID crisis; with 70 callouts in 2020 and over 50 this year.

It's a sad fact that the team has completed many recoveries from our local rivers, often people who had no intention of going into the water. On the basis that "prevention is better than cure" we operate river safety patrols on busy "party nights" in local towns, and have developed a free "Home & Dry" online water safety course, that has seen over 16,500 certificates of completion issued. <https://westmerciasar.org.uk/homeanddry/free-water-safety-online-course/>

In Shrewsbury, alongside the Police and other agencies we set up the Home & Dry - No More River Deaths project, now adopted in Worcester.

Our equipment, overheads and training are paid for by donations



and grants. Members are volunteers who fund their own travel and equipment and fundraise throughout the year.

We have not been able to do the public fundraising during the COVID lockdowns that we relied on to cover our operational and training costs. Our reserves are depleted and we need to find the money to make investments to maintain our services. We have just recruited new members and need to provide basic training to national agreed standards. We fulfil most of this internally, costing only volunteer time, but there are some external qualifications we need to pay for.

We are hoping to find local companies and individuals who would like to be our supporters. Of course, donations help us but we hope to build longer term relationships that can be of mutual benefit. Can we be your Charity of the Year or a charity partner engaged with your employees, enhancing your Corporate Social Responsibility commitments?

For more details, please contact: andy.neal@westmerciasar.org.uk
Or take a look at our website: <https://westmerciasar.org.uk>
Or follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wmsar/>

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